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“I Lived With Latin Americans”

“I Lived
with
Latin Americans”

BY
JOHN L. STROHM

With 152 Photographs by the Author



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*"I hope you will enjoy reading about me and my sister
and my folks. We live in the 20 nations of Latin America."*

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“I Lived With Latin Americans”

Meet the Other Americans!

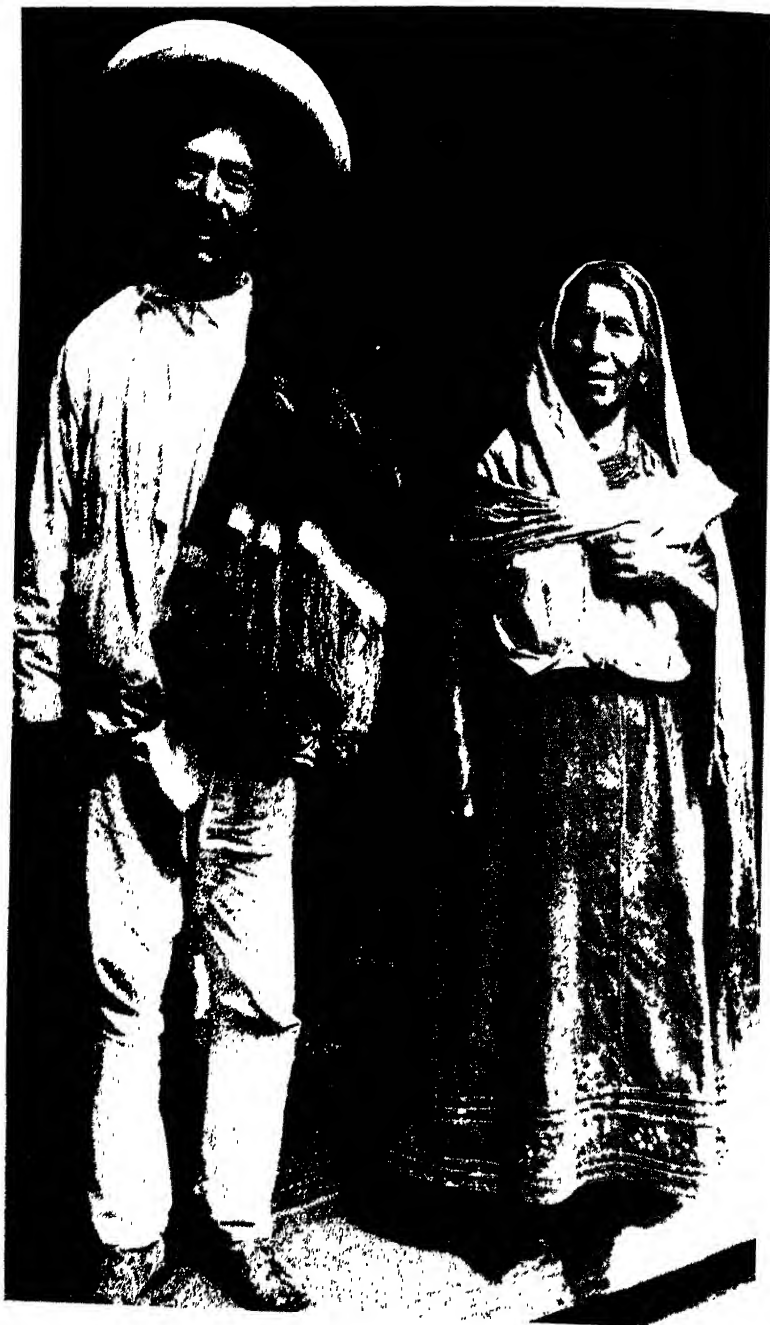
ON New Year's Day, I asked the girl to marry me! Three days later I went into the Prairie Farmer offices in Chicago to see my editorial boss. I told him I would like to discuss a few plans for the coming year, certain he could read in my face that it was no mere story project I had in mind. He pushed a memo across the desk and said brusquely, "Before we go into anything trivial, read that memo." That memo suggested that I was to leave immediately for "as long as it takes" to visit all of the countries in Latin America. I was to find out how our neighbors live, what they grow and what they think of Uncle Sam.

Two weeks later — the "trivial" matter of getting married (after waiting 28 years) postponed — I was flying over unexplored Amazon jungles. Yes, I admit Latin America came as quite a surprise to me.

One of my first jobs was to learn there are *other* Americans. An Argentine bluntly administered the lesson. "You people from the United States always call yourselves 'Americans.' Where did you get a monopoly on that term?"

His is a legitimate complaint since we do happen to be only *one* of 21 American republics. Some of them go further and point out the fact that Americus Vesputius never even saw Uncle Sam's dominion, nor did Columbus. We Yanks, it seems, were just a bit more aggressive in proclaiming ourselves *the* Americans. Our neighbors to the south call us *Norteamericanos* or just *Yanquis* and *gringos*.

When the lady tourist in Rio de Janeiro inquired "What is the capital of South America?" it revealed more of our amazing ignorance, the surprising fact that there are no less than 20 other sovereign nations in the Americas—ten in South America, six in Central America, three in the West Indies, and one (Mexico) in North America. All of these 20



I Talked with Peons . . . Peons like these Mexicans make up the bulk of the Latin American people. To know Latin America we must know them, how they live, what they think. I spent most of my time in the rural areas among such people.

republics have been conveniently lumped together under the catch-all heading of Latin America, mainly because their ancestors and culture originated in southern Europe. But that doesn't mean all of these nations are similar, even though I am frequently asked, "What are the people like in South America?"

Each of these nations has her own distinct characteristics, peoples, problems, and ideas. For instance: Haiti is Negro, Guatemala is Indian, Argentina is white. Costa Rica has a democracy while next-door Nicaragua has a dictatorship. Paraguay is primitive and Uruguay is progressive. Brazilians speak Portuguese and Haitians speak French, while all the rest talk Spanish.

That brings up the perils and embarrassments of language. I lost no opportunities to practice my Spanish until the episode



... And I Talked with Presidents. Dr. Carlos Arroyo del Rio, president of Ecuador, represents the ruling class which is now waking to the needs of the people.

in a hotel lobby made me cautious. It was January and the thermometer stood at 105, so with legitimate reason for opening a weather conversation I gave one of those offhand gestures and said to the charming señorita (no mere figure of speech): "*Muy caliente, si?*"

I was abruptly set back on my heels with a "No! No! No! No! No!", and she wagged her finger once for every "No!"

My linguistic companion laughed uproariously (as *Norte-americanos* do at such things). He explained that instead of saying "Very warm, isn't it?" I had really insinuated in effect, "You're a very hot baby, yes?"

Fifth Columnists? No, Latin America is not seething with Axis agents. Some of the officials down there were just as perturbed about us before Pearl Harbor—our selling scrap iron to Japan, etc. When we picture these countries as ripe for conquest, we are not taking into consideration that they have as great a respect for freedom as we.

The large cities of Latin America are an improvement over many in the United States. They have all of the so-called earmarks of civilization, including beautiful parks, plazas and palaces. And if all the statues of men on horses could only come to life these nations would have no fear of Adolf's armies. But the modern cities accentuate the contrast you see when you get outside the city limits.

The most important man, it has often been said, is the "man in the street." Not in Latin America! There the most important man is the "man in the field," and here's why: More than two-thirds of all Latin Americans live on farms. They produce their own food, and also commodities that make up two-thirds of the export wealth. With the exception of three or four, none of these countries have coal or iron or oil, thus no heavy industry. The soil provides them with their corn and beans, bananas and rice to eat; and it provides farm produce to swap for the machinery, fuel and clothing they buy from other countries.

Really to know these countries of Latin America, then, it is necessary, after visiting the cocktail bars, shaded plazas, beautiful Cathedrals and magnificent buildings of the capital

cities, to venture beyond the city limits. So I talked with the peon, as well as the president. I helped gather rubber in the Amazon, rode horses on the pampas, picked coffee in Colombia, and followed a llama train in the high Andes. I made an 18,000-mile flying round trip from Chicago to Chicago, but I traveled another 7,000 miles by auto, train, oxcart and donkey. Many times I walked, out in the rural areas.

This "man in the field" in Latin America, about whom we have heard so little, should not be neglected. He may be illiterate, landless and ruled by a dictator, but since he is in the majority he is the most important man in Latin America.

However, until this "man in the field" is educated, democracy cannot succeed. Until he learns scientific methods of farming, the nation dependent upon its soil cannot prosper. Until he gets a square deal, the nation cannot have stability. Until his standard of living is raised and his health improved the nation cannot progress.

Before I go into more detail, I want to say our Latin American neighbors are friendly folks. After traveling in 50 countries of five continents, I am constantly amazed at how courteous and good-natured people are, all over the world. All in all, these neighbors of ours are a most charming people—we would do well to know them better. And that's what I am attempting to do, merely introduce you to the peoples of the other Americas.

First, the biggest nation of them all, Brazil . . .

I.

“God Must Have Been A Brazilian”

BRAZIL is a leisurely coffee-drinking country of alligators and opera, skyscrapers and jungles, sophisticates and savages, which some day may be the greatest nation on earth.

Superlatives written in boxcar style could never do justice to this fabulous country. For Brazil is bigger than the United States plus three extra sets of New England states. The third largest country in the world, it is bigger than 17 other Latin American republics put together and has a common frontier with all South American nations except two. Within Brazilian borders can be grown practically any crop known to man. Under the ground lie more and different minerals than possessed by any other single country. Kipling had the idea when he said, “Brazil is a world in itself.”

What a world to drop into for a few weeks’ visit! While the folks back home were shoveling snow, I smoked rubber in the Amazon jungle; inspected coffee trees in São Paulo; went to a Carnival dance in Rio; drove humpbacked oxen; wrote my name in a *fazenda* guestbook a few pages over from the signatures of a king and queen; and rolled corn shuck cigarettes with our Brazilian neighbors. They’re *simpatico*—grand people in anybody’s language.

“Brazil today is about where the United States was when Daniel Boone first ventured across the Alleghenies,” observed a Brazilian friend. And I believe him.

Brazil is big, but empty. Economists claim Brazil can support a potential population of 900 million people—twenty times the present number. For instance, the state of Amazonas, 17 times the size of Ohio, has 1,200 acres of jungle land for every man, woman and child within its borders.

Brazil is rich in natural resources, still untapped. Although she has the largest iron ore deposits in the world and is the leading producer of steel and pig iron in Latin America, this country imported \$28,500,000 worth of steel and steel products in 1939.

Brazil is sprouting profusely with food, yet the majority of her people are ill-fed. In a land where a man and a machete can scarcely keep up with nature's vegetation, people suffer from malnutrition. Only four per cent of the land is under cultivation. Daniel Boone would feel right at home since two-thirds of this country is frontier, unoccupied except by un-



"Ham" of Crude Rubber. This seringueiro shows the crude rubber he has just smoked. Until 1910, fellows like this gathered 90 per cent of the world's rubber from wild trees in the great Amazon jungle. When the British transplanted the rubber trees to the Far East, Brazil lost her rubber market.

tamed Indian tribes and occasional settlements of a handful of whites.

Speaking of Indians, let me catch my breath, back off a bit from its bulk, and we'll proceed to see Brazil as I saw it, a little at a time.

My first introduction to the Brazilian half of South America was the green jungle carpet spread out three miles below our soaring strato-liner. Noticing my intent and open-mouthed enthralment, the plane steward volunteered: "See down there? Indians live in those jungles. They use blow guns with poisoned arrows." (You could see he enjoyed telling me all about it.) "Pretty mean, they say," he added, unnecessarily.

I looked again, swallowed and asked, quite casually for a farm boy who had never faced anything wilder than a trapped skunk: "Say, where would we land if these motors were to fail?"

"These motors never fail," was the answer. Since the four motors did continue to perform perfectly, I jotted down the steward's story as hearsay—until we arrived in Belém. There I saw members of a government boundary expedition who had just returned from up the Amazon River. One fellow was all shot up, and his wounds were caused by poisoned darts. These uncivilized savages use blow guns with six-foot barrels. They insert small darts, give a big puff to send the feathered bits of death on their way. (Uncivilized is the word for it; just think what "civilized" Europe could teach these backwoods people about killing on a mass scale!)

The flat dark forests were laced with a network of rivers and streams, and suddenly we saw a whopper. It had to be the Amazon; we were flying three miles a minute, yet it took us several minutes to cross. "Golly, what a river," I thought. "It makes the Mississippi look like Mill Creek." But several minutes later we flew over another stream just as wide; surely the pilot must be flying in circles. But no, the land was the island of Marajo, bigger than Belgium, yet squatting easily in the mouth of this yellow giant which pours five million



Smoking Rubber. After the rubber trees have been tapped and the sap gathered, it must be smoked. This Brazilian youth dips his paddle in the sap, then revolves it slowly over a smoky fire until the sap hardens into crude rubber.

gallons of water into the Atlantic every second.¹ (That gives you some idea of why oceans do not go dry.)

Rain was coming down in the proverbial buckets when we landed at Belém's jungle-hemmed airport. It rains every day, 112 inches a year. God must have known these people would need raincoats, else why would He have planted millions of rubber trees throughout the rain soaked Amazon jungle? Indians, the historians tell us, made rubber coats for themselves before white men ever had erasers on their pencils. As the tires on my automobile wear thin, I often think of the day I made the rounds with a Brazilian *seringueiro* (rubber gatherer).

Rubber trees (*Hevea brasiliensis* if you want to be technical) grow wild and are scattered here and there over countless miles of choked jungle growth. So the *seringueiro's* first job is to locate about a hundred rubber trees and hack a path from tree to tree with his machete, an over-sized butcher

¹ The Amazon is 200 feet deep in its lower stretches, and ocean-going boats can go 2,300 miles up the river.

knife. This had all been done, of course, when we started out about daylight to tap the trees—the sap runs in the early morning. On each tree he made a diagonal cut through the bark, half way around the trunk. A little clay cup was stuck to the tree to catch the white latex as it oozed down the groove at the rate of a cup a day. That afternoon we gathered the sap, about 2½ gallons of it, and got ready to do the smoking.

In a little palm leaf lean-to, we built a fire of palm nuts—they smoke best—and funneled the smoke through an old tin can. We poured the latex into a wide, shallow chafing dish affair, made of bark. The *seringueiro* dipped the flat paddle into the milky fluid and rotated it over the smoke. Then, as the sap quickly hardened into raw rubber, he dipped the paddle again and held it over the smoke. No knack to it; you just dip and smoke, revolving the paddle as if you were barbecuing a ham. From the two gallons of latex we got a nine-pound "ham" of crude rubber which he sold at the village. Usually, *seringueiros* work for a big land-owner, receive little more than living necessities in return for their labor. Until 1910 the Amazon basin produced practically all of the world's raw material for such things as bicycle tires and hot-water bottles. Sales of pneumatic tires in the United States caused a rubber rush to the Amazon in the early 1900's. Rubber rose to \$1.50, and in 1910 hit \$3 a pound. That year Brazil alone produced 42,000 tons. Those were boom days. Manáos, a village a thousand miles up the river in the heart of the greatest jungle on earth, built a million-dollar opera house and imported operas from Paris.

But today the rats have taken over the empty opera house and the jungle is encroaching on Manáos. For Brazil's rubber balloon was punctured by a Britisher named Henry Wickham who smuggled rubber seeds from Brazil to London and then transplanted them to the Far East. Before our war with Japan, the plantations of Malaya, the Dutch Indies and other lands in the Far East produced about 95 per cent of the world's raw rubber.

Several years ago I visited these rubber plantations in the Orient and saw why they have monopolized the rubber trade:

First, the trees are planted in vast groves where the tappers can easily reach them without cutting paths as they must do in the Amazon. Second, the plantation crew scientifically taps with a special knife. In Brazil, the rubber gatherer uses a machete, "butchers" more often than he taps. Third, plantation trees have been carefully selected for hardiness and heavy production, while only wild trees are tapped in the Amazon. Fourth, a plentiful supply of cheap Chinese and Malayan labor is available at a few cents a day.

But Brazil has not given up. Renewed hope and expectation come from Henry Ford's plantation 800 miles up the Amazon. This notable attempt to grow plantation rubber in the Western Hemisphere started back in 1928 when Ford leased several million acres from the Brazilian government. It was no easy



Machete Is Main Implement. The average Latin American farmer would be lost without a machete. In fact, it's the only implement many of them own and they use it for everything from cutting their way through the jungle to cultivation of corn.



Scientific Rubber Tapping. Uncle Sam, denied rubber by the Japanese invasion of rubber lands in the Orient, is helping Brazil revive rubber production closer to our back yard. Loren Polhamus, U. S. Department of Agriculture expert, demonstrates the scientific way to tap a rubber tree.

matter to get started. Clearing the jungle was a hard job even with tractors and bulldozers. Labor was scarce, although paid the unheard-of wages of fifty cents a day. The leaf disease struck. Despite these initial handicaps, the Brazilian government predicts that by 1945 these Ford plantations will produce more rubber than is now produced in the entire Amazon area. About 25,000 tons of rubber² came from the wild trees of Brazil in 1941. This figure has since been boosted because of U. S. war needs.

The Far East stole the rubber trade from Brazil and, with the exception of Ford's experiment, nothing much was done about getting it back until recently. Now rubber is coming home with Uncle Sam, biggest rubber user in the world, throwing the homecoming party. In 1940, Congress voted a half million dollars "to conduct investigations toward development of rubber production in the Western Hemisphere."

In Belém, I saw Loren Polhamus, U. S. Department of

² Normal rubber consumption of the United States is about 600,000 tons.

Agriculture, working with Brazilian scientists, budding rubber seedlings of known productivity and resistance to leaf disease, and fighting an uphill battle. One day I went out with him to his palm-thatched workshop at the jungle edge to give the "hot water treatment" to some rubber seeds to prevent disease. He had instructed his Brazilian crew to have some hot water ready, and when we arrived the water was boiling.

"Where are the seeds?" he asked. His helpers pointed to the barrel of boiling water—the seeds had been cooking there for three hours. No disease in those seeds anymore!



Grafting Rubber Seedlings. This Brazilian is grafting buds from tested rubber trees on seedlings to get bigger production. But don't expect it overnight—it takes about seven years to bring a tree into production.

All potential rubber raising nations are cooperating in bringing rubber back to the Americas. A total of 15 million rubber trees have been planted within the past two years in a dozen Latin American countries. Two-thirds of them were planted by these various governments in cooperation with our Department of Agriculture, while U. S. commercial interests accounted for the rest. The day I left Belém a flight of U. S. bombers landed from the far-away Philippines—with rubber seeds.

But we are not going to get shipments of crude rubber tomorrow. It takes from five to seven years before a tree may be tapped; it is 12 years before they attain their greatest production. Then, too, the jungle is a hard nut to crack and labor is relatively scarce. However, Uncle Sam hopes Henry Ford's Model-T experiment in rubber plantations will be the forerunner of bigger and better rubber development in this hemisphere. Brazil is holding her breath and praying it is so. And in the meantime she is seeking to stimulate the immediate production of rubber from the millions of wild trees.

This Amazon jungle strangles about one-third of Brazil. Heavy rainfall nurtures tangled masses of undergrowth through which you can go only by hacking your path. Orchids grow wild and parrots call but this is not exactly an exotic place of romance. Indians and half-ton snakes roam on land; alligators lie in the huge swamps and mucky sloughs which spread out for miles on either side of the Amazon; and a cannibal fish, the *piranha*, infests the rivers. These sharp-toothed 14-inch fish, traveling in schools, attack and eat in 30 minutes any unwary cow caught in the water—a man in less time than that.

Just because Brazil has one million square miles of solid forest do not get the idea that trees grow in proportion to the snakes. There is some mahogany, ebony, rosewood and Spanish cedar, but competition is too keen in this jungle to give trees a chance to get very big. While more than one-half of Brazil is covered with forests, only 1½ per cent of her export wealth comes from timber. Home building? Of course, but why build a home out of mahogany when a shack of bamboo and palm leaves serves as well and is easier to



Opening Cacao Pods. This young Brazilian mother whacks open the creased fruit of the cacao tree. On the inside are 20, or so, chocolate beans. Brazil ranks second in world production of chocolate.

build? Only a few thousand people live in this vast unexplored section of Brazil, mostly Indians and *caboclos* (white and Indian) who gather rubber and other forest products for a living.

The strangest things come from the Brazilian trees. As I wandered out through the Amazonian forest I saw a fellow poling his crude canoe along a muddy stream. One end of the boat was filled with yellow fruits the size of a pear and creased like a muskmelon. He carried them in his home-woven basket and dumped them in a pile outside his hut. It was woman's work from there on—his young wife, a baby in her arms, chopped open these fruits and gouged out the pulp containing many persimmon-like seeds. Now and then the mother would stop long enough to stuff her baby's mouth full of the cacao pulp.

This Brazilian mother was working that you might have cocoa for breakfast and chocolate bars between meals—these were cacao beans. Cacao is Brazil's third biggest export item.³ I talked with a young fellow in Rio de Janeiro whom the government sent to New York to convince us we should buy more Brazilian cocoa. In the past we have bought most of it from the African Gold Coast, the leading producer. "Why not buy from Brazil, your friend?" he asked me. I don't know—why not?

Beneath one tree I saw what looked like dried-up coconuts. But it was no palm tree they were under—it was the biggest tree in the jungle, with a five-foot trunk. A Brazilian saw my perplexity, unsheathed his machete and began whacking away on one of these brown balls of wood. It came open and out tumbled 20 Brazil nuts; the "nigger toes" we eat at Christmas time come in nature's hardwood package, heavy and hard enough to knock a man out if he's around when they fall.

One day in the jungle near Belém, rain gave me an excuse to dodge into a forest dweller's hut. The two-room house was thatched with palm leaves and had walls of woven branches plastered with mud. The floors were of dirt. The cook stove

³ In 1938 she exported 282 million pounds of cacao, 4.2 per cent of her exports. About 98 per cent of it is grown in Bahia in the northeast of Brazil on plantations covering half a million acres.



Cacao Beans Drying. The cacao beans are spread out in the sun to dry. Less than 100 miles from where I took this picture live savage Indians who still use blow guns and poisoned darts, so I was told.

consisted of three stones under a lean-to on which Mrs. Deodoro balanced her pots and pans. The family of seven slept in crudely woven hammocks. Little Maria showed me the front room. The only furniture was a bench and small table; a calendar picture of President Vargas hung on the wall and a tiny Catholic statuette, a beer cap on it for decoration, stood on the table.

A word about language. My English is fair, in French I can get by, and Spanish I was learning—but Portuguese! I had to talk it mostly with my hands. And that is what got me in trouble when the head of the house spent a good five minutes trying to ask me something. I worked just as hard trying to understand. Finally, because I didn't want to flunk in a language which little Maria was obviously speaking quite fluently, I let my face light up with understanding and said, "Ah, Sim! Sim! Sim!" (Thrice yes.) And I slapped my leg approvingly. A minute later I was ready to take it all back.



Brazil Nuts. Brazil nuts come boxed in nature's package, a heavy ball of wood the size of a coconut. Each one has 15 or 20 nuts, neatly arranged like sections of an orange.

In came his wife with a drink for me in a not-too-clean coconut shell. Too late I realized I had said, "Yes, I'm thirsty." (Of course I wasn't—not after being warned repeatedly about drinking water in the tropics.) Stalling didn't work so I finally tasted it, then screwed up my face as if I had bitten into a puckery persimmon. Too sour? Again they proved too hospitable for me. In came the Missus with a nutful of sugar to sweeten it. I drank, but only in the interest of better international relations!⁴

In little patches around his hut where trees have been hacked down and burned, this jungle farmer plants rice and beans, several hills of corn and some *manioc*⁵ for food. He trades crude rubber for the little jerked beef his family eats. The feudal island of Marajo nearby has 600,000 cattle which graze (sometimes belly-deep in water) under the eye of black cowboys who straddle water buffalo, eat alligator meat and

⁴ The drink was made from the pulp of cacao beans; I didn't even get so much as a stomach ache.

⁵ *Manioc*, also called yuca, cassava and mandioca, is a large sweet potato-like tuber from which we get tapioca. It grows in most of the Latin American countries and is used widely for food.

work for eight cents a day while their bosses sip cool drinks in Rio.

Boys and girls get married young—or rather they do not get married at all. Costs too much! However, that does not mean they are any less faithful to their mates. There are few schools; two years of schooling is practically a college education. But it takes more than reading and arithmetic to get along in the jungle, and these youngsters have what it takes.

Lack of capital, inadequate transportation and a climate that keeps growth ahead of the machete have thus far conspired to keep man at a distance from this third of Brazil.

Belém (known all over the world as Pará) is a city of 200,000 near the mouth of the Amazon which remembers best the good old days when rubber was king and Belém was rubber capital of the world. Mango trees line the walks, and many a leisurely stroller has been conked on the head with one of these juicy fruits. (Not to be confused with the hollow vegetable you stuff with cabbage—these mangos are sweet, mellow fruit.) It rains every day in Belém. Visitors are warned to



Amazon Hut. I had a warm welcome in this rubber gatherer's hut in the Amazon. The dirt floor was neatly swept, a lace curtain covered the open window, and the sunshine peeked through the thatched walls.



Maria Lives in Jungle. Little Maria speaks only Portuguese, but she invited me in for a visit. She helps her mother cook over an open fire in the other room of their two-room home.

drink only bottled water, eat only cooked vegetables and sleep under mosquito nets. It is impossible to get very far from the city on land unless you swing a strong machete.

But just because its streets end in the greatest jungle in the world, don't think Belém is backwoodsy. For my first lunch I came down to the hotel dining room without a tie. My waiter, who is paid 40 cents a day, refused to serve me until I retired to "finish my dressing." Kids outside were near-naked but in Brazil if you regard yourself as somebody, you always wear coat and tie outside your bedroom. Our five-course meals opened with Brazil nut soup which we sipped to the music of a four-piece orchestra playing "Indian Love Call."

When I checked out of the hotel I was presented with a bill for 157\$000; it looked as if I had bought the hotel. I was relieved when I found that my three-day bill for room, five-course meals and bottled water totaled only \$7.85. The milreis (1\$000) is worth about a nickel. That explains why they say

Henry Ford pays "extravagant" wages on his rubber plantations—50 cents a day. (Brazil has recently adopted a new system of currency. The cruzeiro is a streamlined, decimal-pointed equivalent of the old complicated milreis.)

Our 1600-mile flight to Rio followed the relatively new route across the interior of Brazil, rather than around the coastal hump. For the first three hours we saw nothing but the dark green jungle, no roads, no railroads, no villages. Halfway between Belém and Rio we swooped down to the Barreiras airport. Barreiras is a little cattle town in the "Great Plains" region of Brazil, a vast upland country of grassy plains, scrub brush and timber, where the main occupation is cowpunching. One-third of Brazil is dense steaming jungle and another third is like this with few people, fewer towns and practically no roads.

Take Barreiras, for instance. No road nor railroad connects this town with the coast. It is only two hours by air from the coast but it takes Pan American Airways 28 days by small river boat and pack horse to get gasoline to the airport. Many of the people have never seen an automobile. The towns⁶ resemble our old Wild West towns of fact and fiction with two-gun men, knife throwers and *pinga*-drinking cowboys. (*Pinga* is a 24-karat brand of firewater made from sugar cane.)

The government obviously has hopes of opening up this country—a federal district and future capitol site already have been laid out in the wilderness of Goyaz. Brazilians told me this undeveloped interior is destined to be one of the great cattle producing regions of the world, once markets and transportation develop. This area now has 40 per cent of Brazil's 47 million cattle. Hump-backed Zebus from India have been crossed with native cattle to evolve a breed which can resist the ticks and withstand the heat. These cattle are big boned and rangy with triple qualifications; they give milk, work well to oxcarts and make fair beef. After feeding on the coarse

⁶ Carolina, one of these Brazilian towns, was settled by Southerners who couldn't stand the Yankees after the Civil War.



Zebu Withstands Ticks. To withstand the tropical heat—and ticks—hump-backed bulls from India have been crossed with native cows. Already Brazil ranks fourth in the world in number of cattle. Some day, when her empty plains are populated, she may be the biggest beef producer in the world.

pastures of Matto Grosso and Goyaz for three years, they are driven by the million to the fattening pastures of São Paulo.⁷

That makes about two-thirds of Brazil we have skipped over, the dense jungles and the interior cattle plains. We could wander all over this part of the country without meeting one-tenth of the people—90 per cent of the population live on the Brazilian plateau, a narrow slice of Eastern Brazil. The half-mile high plateau is a bit of geographical luck for this nation; it gives Brazil a more or less temperate climate in the torrid zone. Industry and agriculture is concentrated in this

⁷ Brazil has more cattle than Argentina. Cattle driven to São Paulo pastures sell cheap. A three-year-old grass-fed steer weighs only 650 pounds, sells for less than two cents a pound. After fattening, it may bring three cents.

section where it is several degrees cooler, and people feel more like working.

During my Brazilian stay I had two complaints and the heat brought one of them. Two weeks after I left sub-zero Chicago, I landed in Rio de Janeiro in the midst of a 104-degree January heat wave. I did what any American with horse sense does when it's hot. I took off my coat and rolled up my sleeves.

All went well until I got on a street car. The conductor tapped me on the shoulder and began to talk impatiently. I thought that must be the Latin way of asking for my fare; I offered him different bits of money so he could take his choice. But no, it wasn't money he was talking about. He insisted that I leave the car. Ignorance of the law is no excuse; and he who would ride first-class on street cars must wear coats—and shoes. I didn't mind wearing shoes because the pavement gets plenty hot. But coats in this country? I pooh-poohed the idea to a Brazilian friend. His answer was that Brazil has no monopoly on queer ideas.

"You know," he said, "I once got into a streetcar in Alabama, only to be told by a Negro, 'You must get off this car—this section is reserved for Negroes only'."

There is no color line in Brazil. Whites and blacks intermingle and intermarry freely. Sixty per cent of the 45 million people are white, according to government estimates; 20 per cent are mulattoes; 10 per cent are *caboclos*; eight per cent are pure Negro; and two per cent are Indian.

Negroes, imported by the million to slave on the sugar and cotton plantations in the north, were freed only 50 years ago. Although they are not excluded because of race, there is some discrimination and it makes Brazilians plenty mad when proud-and-white Argentines call this a "nigger nation." The Indians (except for a few they've rounded up and put on reservations) live in the unexplored Amazon valley. The whites are mainly of Portuguese, Italian and Spanish descent. There are a few German and Japanese.

I've seen most of the capitals of the world but Rio de Janeiro is the most beautiful and most captivating. For here extravagantly polite people live to eat, talk and drink. They

sip coffee at all hours. Business houses find it pays to serve employees free coffee twice a day; otherwise they will skip work to get it at a sidewalk cafe. Brazilians do business as *amigos* (friends) and never refuse to get jobs for their relatives. Government payrolls are liberally padded with those who spend most of their time on private jobs. They frequently break appointments, never apologize for being late and make an art of the pursuit of leisure.

It is hard to get up for breakfast. On my first morning in Rio when I was trying to find the hotel dining room, the elevator boy told me to go back to bed—the waiter always brings breakfast to your bedside. The sophisticated smart set, busy streets, and air conditioned clubs of Rio make up the Brazil we read most about, but this is not really Brazil. Brazil lies beyond the city limits.

Nine-tenths of the people make their living from agriculture or stock raising; products of the soil make up 95 per cent of her export wealth. Brazil leads the world in coffee and banana production; she is the second largest producer of cocoa and oranges; she ranks third in corn and beans; fourth in cattle, and fifth in sugar. In the entire world, that is. Yet *Brazil has less than four per cent of her land under cultivation*. What a tremendous bread basket Brazil could be—and will be! Talk of Brazil feeding a population of 900 million doesn't sound so wild after all.

She has her problems. Some of her farms are in the desert land of the Northeast which need that surplus Amazon rainfall to make them productive. From 1928-31, practically no rain fell and the area has come to be known as "famine land." Here live 30 per cent of the people, mostly Negroes who work in the cotton, cacao and sugar cane fields. A couple of million goats serve as poor men's cows, and five-cents-a-day wages certainly qualifies these Negroes as poor men. Here also is grown the world's largest supply of castor beans—you know, castor oil.

Along the coast I visited a sugar fazenda (large plantation) where, in 1941, 25,000 tons of cane were left standing in the field because of over-production; each mill is restricted by quotas. Sugar cane in Brazil means more than just sweeten-

ing and sorghum. *Pinga*, the "white mule" drink of the poorer classes, is made from sugar cane. (One official told me the three greatest health problems of the rural areas are malaria, worms and *pinga*.) Fuel alcohol is also made from sugar cane and is used to stretch the imported supply of gasoline.

Another notable agricultural area in the extreme south is peopled by Germans and Italians and is rich in forests, grazing land and meat packing plants. The state of Rio Grande do Sul is a livestock offshoot of Uruguay and Argentina where gauchos in baggy pants take care of one-fourth of Brazil's cattle (fine Herefords) and three-fifths of the sheep. This section is about as far from the equator as Florida and is one of the most progressive in the entire country.

But the real heart of Brazil is the coffee and cotton state of São Paulo. In three per cent of Brazil's total area, the people of São Paulo produce one-half of the total agricultural wealth, pay two-thirds of the taxes and proudly count themselves Paulistas first, and then Brazilians. The reddish soil, mild climate and progressive people make this state a well-worked



Sao Paulo Is Business Center. Sao Paulo claims to be the fastest growing city in the world. It is the center of Brazilian industry and agriculture. In this country, business men do business as "amigos", and take their time.



Fazenda Is Big Plantation. Guatapara is one of the biggest coffee fazendas. Three thousand people make it their home. Some workers are born and buried without getting off its fertile acres.

garden spot in an almost neglected country. The state capital, also named São Paulo, is "the fastest growing city in the world" and center of Brazilian initiative and industry.

One of the most sumptuous *fazendas* in São Paulo is managed by Martin Egydio Souza Aranha, uncle of Brazil's Foreign Minister. In a Model-A Ford, he showed me Guatapar—30,000 acres of coffee, cotton, oranges, rice and pasture. At one time this *fazenda* was the largest coffee plantation in the world. And I might remark casually that I signed in the guest book of this regular Hollywood mansion, just a few pages over from the names of King Albert, Queen Elizabeth and Crown Prince Leopold of Belgium, who spent a week here several years ago.

Headquarters on a big *fazenda* is a small town in itself; my home town of West Union would have fit in nicely. Guatapar has its own school, theater (nickel-Westerns are favorites here, too), general store and doctor. I saw the doctor examining the workers' children. "Worms, they are so worse to get rid of," he told me.

Three thousand people live and work on this plantation as their fathers and grandfathers had worked before them.

Often they are born and buried without once getting off the place. There is work to do: 1,000,000 coffee trees, 80,000 orange trees, 1,000 acres of cotton, 900 acres of rice and 2,000 cattle to care for. Modern tractors and machinery are used as well as oxen and mules. Workers earn about 25 cents a day, but 25 cents in Brazil is practically folding money.

The trend, however, is toward smaller farms; many of these huge *fazendas* are being divided and sold. I had a visit with Adolph who owns a farm of 100 acres. He uses mules and the help of three families to do his work, very little machinery. And he rolls his own cigarettes—in corn husks. Adolph is more enterprising than the average. On the way to his farm we passed many tiny mud shacks belonging to Japanese,⁸ but Adolph lives in a plastered house with a tile roof. His wife has a sewing machine and makes all of the family clothing except his suit. They live mainly on rice and beans⁹—beans are the real staff of life. Rice isn't far behind. It is put into flour, biscuits, porridges and sweets. Rice straw is used as forage for horses and the grain mixed with honey is fed to milk cows. Rice also makes dandy face powder, I was told.

Brazil has the third biggest corn crop in the world, but Adolph told me his corn yields only about 15 bushels to the acre. (He gave me an unbelieving look when I mentioned U. S. corn belt yields of 100 bushels, so I didn't dare open up about that Hoosier who grew 191 bushels to the acre.) Brazil has more land in corn—one-fourth of the total cultivated area—than any other crop. It is a flinty variety used for feed and food. Adolph was feeding a couple of almost hairless hogs—they're less subject to lice, he says.

One crop Brazil lacks is wheat; her Argentine flour bill runs around \$30,000,000 annually. So the government has

⁸ Drives against the Fifth Column in Brazil uncovered the fact that high Japanese army officers had been living in these mud huts, masquerading as farmers.

⁹ After seeing the average rice and bean diet I felt guilty eating the many-course meals served in the São Paulo hotel. Sample: cold meat, chicken soup, fried fish, steak, vegetables, ice cream, pineapple, cheese, coffee, each a different course. And all of it cost only 50 cents.

stipulated that all bread flour must contain a 25 per cent mixture of corn, rice and manioc. That brings up my other kick against Brazil—this flour mixture makes a hard lump of bread that must be dunked to save the teeth. However, the regulation has stimulated farmers to planting more wheat, and in 1939 the government saved \$4,000,000 in foreign exchange.

You've heard about the old saying "When in Rome . . ." Well, when in Brazil you not only drink coffee, you practically swim in it. Coffee for all meals, coffee on each visit and coffee in between times adds up to about a dozen cups of the blackest beverage I've ever tasted. (Mom: I didn't dare tell them you held the opinion that coffee was too strong for growing boys. This coffee would be too strong even for that hired hand of ours who used to call your coffee "damaged water.")



Coffee Fazenda. This girl is going to work on a coffee fazenda, her lunch balanced on her head. Although there are many big plantations where hundreds of families live and work, most of the coffee is produced on family-sized farms of 100 acres or less.



Coffee to Burn. There's no coffee shortage in Brazil. This country produces three-fifths of the world's supply. Not only that—in the past decade, she has destroyed more than nine billion pounds because of overproduction.

Three-fifths of the world's supply of coffee¹⁰ is grown here on an area one-fourth the size of Indiana, most of it on home-owned farms of 100 acres or so. Coffee beans come from a bush-like tree, planted in orchards. It grows about 10 feet high and has berries the size of a small cherry. When the berries turn red they are stripped off the trees, cleaned, washed, hulled, dried, husked, tested and shipped. And more than half of the bags are normally shipped to the United States because we happen to drink more coffee than any other nation in the world.

There's a big headache in the coffee business that an extra cup might cure—overproduction. Since 1900 Brazil has tried to maintain coffee prices. First she tried to withhold surplus stocks in years of large crops. This worked for a while but it finally stimulated production in other countries, and new coffee lands in Brazil. The government restricted tree plant-

¹⁰ Average coffee production in Brazil in 1935-39 was 3.1 billion pounds annually, compared with Latin American production of 4.4 billion, total world production of 5.5 billion.

ing, then set out to destroy the surplus. From 1931-40 nine billion pounds of coffee were destroyed—but that isn't all of the story.

When officials first decided to rid the country of the excess coffee, they thought of plowing it under. They soon found that plowing under a half billion pounds of coffee was a tremendous job; besides it destroyed the soil fertility. They tried to burn it, but it wouldn't burn—too much moisture. They threw it into the ocean, but that killed the fish for miles around. Again they turned to fire, dousing the unwanted coffee with imported kerosene to encourage the flames. In recent years Brazil has burned four million bags (132 pounds) of coffee annually. And it cost almost "two-bits" a bag to burn it.

A *Norteamericano* may save Brazil that "two-bits," and make her money instead; he is Herbert Polin who has developed a process for making coffee beans into plastics. The Brazilian government has imported him and built a plant for making *caffelite*. In time it is hoped to convert surplus coffee into airplane parts, gunstocks, bottle caps and wallboard. As this is written, war has brought a new headache in the form of a shipping shortage. Brazil can't get ships to send her coffee to the United States, but Uncle Sam has been buying lots of it and storing it away.

"We've cut down 800,000 coffee trees," I was told at Guatapará. "Cotton makes us more money." They even plant cotton between the rows of producing coffee trees. When Brazil at-



Cotton Boom in Brazil. Brazil is a coming cotton country. On this fazenda, I saw them cutting down coffee trees to plant cotton—cotton makes them more money.



Research Aids Agriculture. The Instituto Agronomico at Campinas is the finest agricultural experiment station in Latin America. Economists say Brazil can support a potential population of 900 million people. Research carried on here may help make Brazil the greatest food producing nation on earth.

tempted to maintain the price of coffee a few years ago by withholding large supplies from the world market, production was stimulated in other countries and Brazil lost part of her coffee market. Then, when we restricted cotton production in the U. S. and helped raise the world price of cotton, Brazil farmers jumped at the chance to shift to cotton production. In 1929, Brazil produced only half a million bales of cotton; in 1940, she produced 21½ million. Today, cotton is the coming crop, making up one-fifth of all exports.

Cotton is not new to Brazil. The early Indians used it to make hammocks and slings to carry babies on their backs. In Maranhão cotton cloth was used as money. This crop has spread from north to south; cotton of every type and staple is picked every month of the year in some sections of the country. Brazilian cotton mills take 40 per cent of the crop and manufacture most of the cotton textiles used in Brazil.

Leader in this cotton development is the São Paulo agricultural experiment station at Campinas, the best I saw in Latin America. Every cotton farmer by law must buy treated seed from the *Instituto Agronomico*. I walked into the *Instituto* to be greeted with "What's wrong with the Illinois football team?" Paulo, Illini '21, showed me around the station. Each year two or three outstanding research experts are sent to the United States for advanced study. I met young scientists who had been working eight years developing hybrid corn adapted to Brazil. Soon farmers can buy seed. One young man explained how he had discovered what gives coffee its flavor, fungi in the bean. They were experimenting with everything from ants, which are quite a pest, to coffee, which is quite a problem.

Agriculture in Brazil has been neglected. However, this experimental station in São Paulo has demonstrated the great potentialities of this fertile land. And it is a trend which is picking up momentum. Minister of Agriculture Costa told me of the government plan of encouraging a "Westward Movement." When all states are as well-managed and developed as São Paulo, Brazil will be well on her way to becoming the most powerful country on earth.

In physical resources, Brazil has everything—almost. All except coal and oil; her coal is inferior and her oil is yet undiscovered.¹¹ And therein lies one reason why this country is so dependent upon her agriculture. She has a great storehouse of minerals—mercury and mica, lead and zinc, nickel and gold, platinum and diamonds. Her iron ore deposits are stupendous, one mountain in Minas Geraes is supposed to be 70 per cent iron. Yet machinery, iron and steel, autos, coal and gasoline make up the bulk of her imports.

Brazil does manufacture most of her consumer goods. Ever since World War I this country has been building up her home industries under government protection. Uncle Sam has helped finance a steel plant and in the spring of 1942 advanced nearly a quarter of a billion dollars in credits, much

¹¹ Among fellow plane passengers to Belém were several Texas oil "wildcatters", going down to prospect for the government.



Abundance of Fruit. Oranges and all other tropical fruits grow profusely. Yet, health officials say that malnutrition is one of Brazil's greatest problems.

of which will be used to develop minerals and raw materials necessary for our war effort. Brazil is on the way up as an industrial nation. Foreign capital is welcomed and on all sides I was told of the tremendous future of the country, of the many rosy opportunities for a go-getter. The other side of the picture is that you must be prepared to spend your profits in the country. You can make money here, you can spend it here; but "you can't take it with you!"

Wages are not exactly sky-high in this potential Garden of Eden. A country school teacher gets \$15 a month; a São Paulo reporter gets \$25 a month; Negro laborers in the North get five or six cents a day; a cook may get \$5 a month. The Ministry of Labor made a wage study in 1938 and found that the average monthly wage in Brazil was \$11.80. Acting on this report the government ordered a minimum wage scale ranging from \$4.50 to \$12 a month for the various sections of the country. Only the upper class is secure and well-fed. And that is a relatively small number.

During the last several years President Vargas has made a start at giving these people relief through social legislation.

A housing project in Rio permits laborers to buy a \$650 house for only \$30 a year. Restaurants in Rio serve balanced meals for six cents. Workers now have holidays, eight-hour days, higher wages for night work, medical assistance and health insurance. However, some of this legislation is merely on the books.

When we think of the lazy tropics we usually think of mosquitoes, malaria and dysentery. But Brazilians point out there is no such thing as a Brazilian disease—they were all brought over by the Europeans: Small pox, yellow fever, cholera, plague and so on through whooping cough. Furthermore, they assure you the climate does not necessarily make you lazy, cool nights serving as the change of season. In short, the commonly held view that climate does not create and stimulate to a desired degree the struggle to live is "erroneous and without foundation."¹² At least that is the official Brazilian slant.

Doctors admit Brazilians as a whole are unhealthy, mainly because they do not eat enough nor the right kind of food. One city of 90,000 has only 3,000 quarts of milk daily, one quart for 30 persons. And the Brazilian butter supply, if served equally to all, would give each person a pound a year. They don't eat enough fruit, although every fruit from pineapple to papayas grows in Brazil. Herbs and patent medicines substitute for doctor's prescriptions in the rural areas.

As long as we're blaming the people who settled Brazil for importing diseases, let's blame them for much of the backwardness of the country today. For when you consider that the Portuguese first settled Brazil a century before the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock, you wonder if maybe they haven't been napping down here in this perpetual summer below the equator. But to understand these people you must understand their history. Most of our folks came to the New World because they wanted to be their own bosses, to worship in their own way, to build homes and raise children. But not the Portuguese! Nor the Spaniards in other Latin American

¹² "Brazil 1939-40, An Economic, Social and Geographic Survey," Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Brazil.



Oxen Provide Horsepower. Oxen do the heavy work on Brazilian farms. And six husky oxen like these can move big loads. Very little modern machinery is used. This is one reason why only four per cent of this gigantic country is under cultivation.

countries. They came to look for gold and quick riches. They were adventurers, not farmers. And they didn't like to run a hoe. Sugar and cotton plantations were only a second-choice means of keeping alive.

They found a few wild Indians who fished, hunted and gathered wild fruit for a living. But the Indians wouldn't work so they had to bring in Negro slaves. Mother Portugal kept a tight rope on this New World child by refusing to let her trade with other countries. Consequently, it was a backwoods Brazil which finally kicked over one trace in 1822, disowned Portugal as Mother Country and set up housekeeping with her own Emperor. In 1888, Brazilians went the whole way, deposed Emperor Don Pedro and set up a republican form of government somewhat similar to our own. They freed the slaves in 1889.

Some would lay part of the blame on these Negro slaves; they fixed bad habits on the white man by doing his work. Even today Brazilians dislike the kind of labor that built log cabins and cleared lands in the United States in frontier days. An educated Brazilian must have a white-collar job. Everyone who makes fifty dollars a month has servants. Manual labor is

for the peon. A big dairy farmer offered to let the students at the agricultural college work in his modern dairy for experience and pay; but the Professor was offended at the suggestion that boys studying agricultural engineering should "work with their hands."

Brazilians are an artistic lot; they build an opera house first, and then a factory. However, a gradual change is making hand labor more respectable. And many young men have caught the vision of Brazil—are working to build and help develop this vast country. Take Jorge for instance. In his private plane we flew to his sugar *fazenda* north of Rio. "I fly out twice a week," he said. "It takes only an hour by plane, a day and night by auto."

Jorge is a hard-working young man interested in raising the standard of living of his people. "Efficiency and discipline is what Brazil needs. We need discipline to get education—education is the greatest need of our people. Our education today makes every boy want to be a lawyer or professional man. I want to teach my people to see the dignity of working with the soil," he told me.

He has built better cottages for his workers, taught them to grow gardens for health and plant flowers. He has provided competition for them in farming. He requires his overseers to dress neatly and maintain themselves as gentlemen, examples for the many workers. At a recent city exposition he sold big glasses of cold milk for a penny each, to stimulate increased consumption. He is crossing imported Holsteins with humpbacked Zebus. "Native cows which produced only two quarts of milk, when crossed with Holstein bulls, have daughters which give eight quarts of milk," he asserted.

But his real goal is to have his own school where the children will be taught not only to read and write, but to sew, to build and to live for Brazil. When I told him of the 4-H Club work in the United States he was enthusiastic. "That's what we need in Brazil: An organization with an emblem and a creed, teaching practical things to our youth." Brazil has Jorges, but could use many more.

On our return trip from the *fazenda*, Jorge circled over Rio, flew close to the famous Sugar Loaf Mountain and almost

touched the statue of Christ which stands as a sentinel on Hunchback Peak, 2,000 feet above the city. Heitor Grillo, director of the National Agricultural School, took me to the top of Sugar Loaf on the cable car, and there we looked over the beautiful city, sipped *guaraná* (the "coke" of Brazil) and talked education.

He declared education was Brazil's greatest need. A law says all children living within two kilometers of school must go to school. "But alas, we do not have enough schools or teachers," he said. I was on one *fazenda* where the \$15-a-month teacher (she had gone to school a total of six years) taught reading and writing. She couldn't teach much more because the boys and girls all help in the coffee fields and seldom come to school more than a year or two. Enthusiastic followers of President Vargas point out that from 1930 to 1940 the number of primary schools jumped from 27,000 to 40,000; high schools from 300 to 700; and trade schools from 1,000 to 2,000. And the number is still climbing.

Inadequate transportation has done its bit in holding back the development of Brazil. It is hard to get around. This



Schools Are Scarce. Teacher of this school gets about \$15 a month. Pupils go to school three or four years, then work in the coffee fields. Brazil has laws saying children must be in school until 15. But unfortunately there are not enough schools or teachers to go around.

country touches all of the countries and colonies in South America except two, and yet if you started out from Rio by auto you would be stopped by impassible jungle before you reached a single country. Mountains and jungles and lack of fuel have held back road and railroad building.¹³ Many locomotives burn wood; and to eke out the imported gasoline supply, large quantities of fuel alcohol is now made from sugar cane and manioc. Manioc sometimes yields as high as 110 tons of tubers to the acre; maybe some day Brazil will grow her fuel.

Lack of transportation facilities, backward agriculture and high illiteracy cannot all be blamed on the poor government—Brazil's entire budget is only a little over \$200,000,000. New York City alone spends three times as much.

When I asked about politics, the answer usually was, "Let's change the subject." A five-foot-four gaucho has been riding one of the biggest countries in the world for the past dozen years and pulling the reins—his critics say he uses a gag bit.

President Getulio Vargas is the dictator, although in the cafes they call him just plain "Getulio." Getulio ran for president in 1930, received most of the votes (his followers say) but somehow the other fellow was elected. That plainly was not right, so his followers made it right—they showed force and fight and made him president. In 1937, he announced an election to give the government back to the people; but the candidates were both pretty punk in his estimation, so he called the entire thing off, dissolved the Congress and made himself dictator in perpetuity. That is, for as long as he can stay where he is. Before Vargas came to power, women could not vote in elections. Now women have the right to vote, but there are no elections.

"He certainly is a popular president," I commented as I saw his picture in shoe shining parlors, hotels, cafes and stores. Then a friend explained: "It is the law!"

¹³ Brazil has 20,711 miles of railroads, two-thirds owned by the government. She has 119,000 miles of roads but when it rains four-fifths of them can no longer be called roads. In 1937, Brazil had 170,000 motor vehicles.



Manioc for Food and Fuel. From this big root, we get tapioca. In Brazil they call it manioc, while other nations call it mandioca, cassava, yuca, etc. This huge starchy root is a source of food. This nation also uses it to make alcohol to run her autos.

The majority of Brazilians say he has done great things for Brazil, has been a benevolent dictator; they remind us that democracy takes an educated people. They say he has brought unity to Brazil, no small item. "The United States of Brazil" (Brazil's full name) is misleading—they have been no more united than our colonies were right after the revolution. The gauchos of Rio Grande do Sul, the Paulistas of São Paulo and the Cariocas of Rio are so jealous of their privileges they have erected state tariff barriers. Vargas has erased some of these sectional jealousies.

Other Brazilians privately expressed the desire for a true democracy, rather than a one-man government. Those Brazilians who have visited our country talk so feelingly of democ-



Carnival Is Life. "The carnival is not pleasure, it is life itself", say pleasure-loving Brazilians of this holiday of holidays. The mad three-day whirl before Lent is like a combination Fourth of July-Halloween-New Year's Eve celebration.

racy in the land of Lincoln it would make any of us proud, and a bit ashamed. Proud that we are U. S. citizens but ashamed that we do not appreciate our freedom and liberties more.

I asked one charming lady from the tourist department about politics. "There are no politics, but would you like to know more about the Carnival? Carnival," she insisted, "is not pleasure; it is life." The people look forward to Carnival for six months, enjoy it three days and then spend no inconsiderable period recuperating. I was just there for the warm-up, but people high and low were whooping it up.

This Carnival is kind of a Fourth of July, Halloween and New Year's Eve celebration all rolled into one, with masked balls, street dancing and cavorting which reaches a three-day climax just before Lent. These people have more energy than six-day bike riders. They roam the streets singing and dancing; they ride on top of streetcars. And that weaving, wiggling, jitterbug dance called the Samba! Ooh la la! My friend in the tourist department thought it was an insult to the country when I left just three days before Carnival.

A note to the young folks: I intended to find out for you all about Brazilian dates. So a young Brazilian friend took me to a Carnival ball and told me to ask a girl for a dance. When I protested I couldn't talk Portuguese he said, "We talk with our eyes." That was pretty deep water for me, but I did manage to dance some. And then I asked to take the girl to a movie—you know, in pursuit of my journalistic profession of obtaining information. Well, my information was that when a young man takes a young lady to a show in Brazil, he either takes her mother along, or asks to marry the girl. So I'm sorry I have no report to make, except to say chaperones are a part of it all in Brazil.

Brazil and the United States are far from being geographical neighbors. Africa is only 1,200 miles away, while New York is three times as far from Rio de Janeiro. But Brazil is probably Uncle Sam's No. 1 Friend in Latin America. Brazilians are strong for Uncle Sam because they like us and because they believe they will get much farther stringing along with us. Brazil sees herself displacing Argentina as the leading Latin American nation—with U. S. aid.

Regretfully, I went to São Paulo's red-soiled airport one morning for my flight to Paraguay. Again we flew mile after mile over vast dormant wealth. Suddenly the green forests opened and we saw the mighty Iguassú Falls, twice as big as Niagara. Hidden in the midst of a jungle on the Argentine frontier, reachable only on donkey back, these amazing falls are one of the world's gems. They're a tremendous source of potential energy, but that energy is as yet untapped. Somehow the Iguassú Falls are a symbol of Brazil.

Well, that is Brazil in a nutshell—although it takes a pretty big nut to hold half a continent. Her modern cities can hold up their skyscrapers with any on earth, yet two-thirds of the country has not been touched, some not even explored. She is having surplus trouble just when the westward movement is starting. And in this land where opera is popular, everyone drinks coffee and living is leisurely, I was treated like a Prodigal Son.

The Brazilians have a saying: "God must have been a Brazilian," since he endowed this country with so much

natural wealth. Given time, these friendly people may some day be citizens of the greatest country on earth. Potentially, they're that right now.

Brazil At A Glance

- Size:* 3,275,510 square miles; bigger than United States, plus another Texas.
- People:* 45 million: white, 60%; mulatto, 20%, white-Indian, 10%; Negro, 8%; Indian, 2%. Some savage Indians still in Amazon jungles. Speak Portuguese.
- Capital:* Rio de Janeiro. Population, 1,900,000.
- Sells:* Coffee, cotton, cacao, beef products.
- Buys:* Machinery, iron and steel, autos, wheat, coal, gasoline.
- Industry:* Brazil is predominantly agricultural; less than 4% of land cultivated. Two-thirds of country almost empty, much is unexplored. Brazil has many minerals, but little coal or oil. Manufacturing increasing fast.

Although most Brazilians are poor and illiteracy is high, this is potentially the richest nation on earth.

II.

Paraguay Needs Men

UNIQUE is an overworked word, but it is the only adjective to hitch to Paraguay.

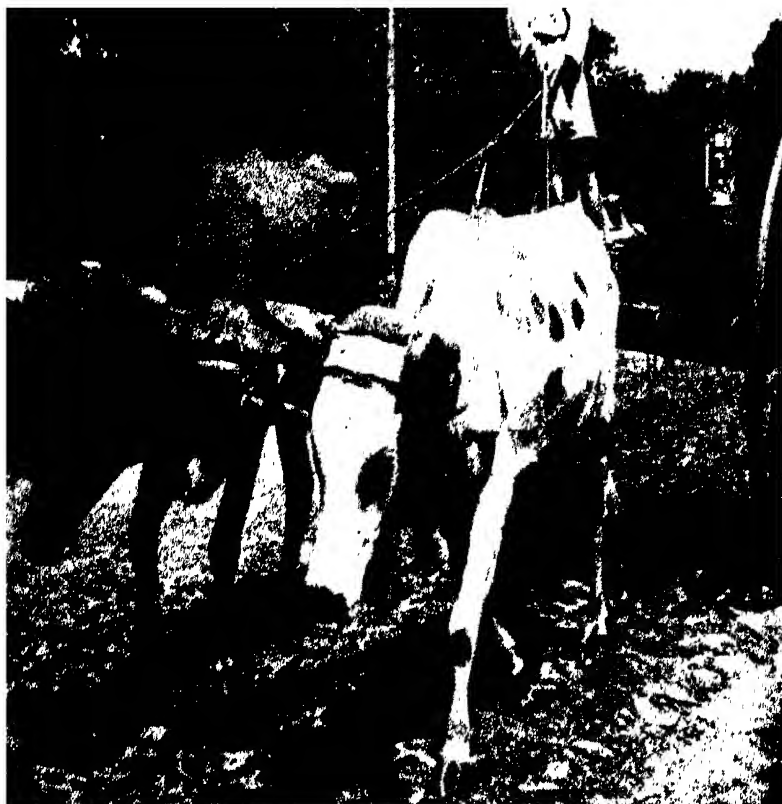
For this is a country of pretty girls—and cigar-smoking women; a nation with a good-sized navy, and no sea coast. Spanish is the official language, but most of the people speak the Indian tongue of Guaraní. More than three times the size of Illinois, this nation has only one-fourth as many people as Chicago. Paraguay built one of the first railroads on the continent, but she has just constructed her first hard road. This republic has had four presidents in four years, and rumors of a fifth have to be squelched periodically.

Settled more than 400 years ago and once prosperous and progressive, Paraguay today is one of the least developed nations in Latin America. Her soil is so fertile it would sprout a hoe handle, yet this country does not produce enough food to feed her own people. I went to see the Minister of Agriculture to find out why.

"For \$100 I'll give you 100 acres of land—it's good land, too." The minister was speaking to this farm editor; and he wasn't kidding. He told of a fertile but nonproductive soil. He said the country needed colonists who would adopt scientific farming methods and get rid of the wooden plow. And he painted such a bright picture of opportunity that the "Go West, Young Man" advice of Grandpa's day paled before the minister's "Come to Paraguay!" call.

All of this on my second day in Paraguay! I thanked the minister but decided not to take out citizenship papers or start planting mandioca until I had seen a bit more of the country. And what a jolting job that was, seeing the country.

In Brazil I had inquired about transportation to neighboring Paraguay and had been told there were only two choices:



Travel by Oxcart. The oxcart and burro are to Paraguay what trains and autos are to the United States. Instead of learning to drive a tractor, youngsters learn to handle a yoke of oxen.

I could go either by plane or on the back of a donkey. When I asked about getting out into the rural areas of Paraguay where five-sixths of the people live, again I was given two choices—and both meant plenty of jolts. For the oxcart and burros are to Paraguay what trains and autos are to the United States. In the entire country there is but one all-weather road, only 640 miles of railroads and 2,000 autos which burn 36-cent gas. (36 cents is a week's wages on a cattle ranch.) Wherever you see the ruts of an oxcart, that is a road. But then transportation isn't hopeless; for a dollar you can always get a donkey—for keeps.

There is no doubt that this country wants and needs colonists. There are fewer than a million people living within its 175,000 square miles—that is more than 120 acres each for every man, woman and child. Yet the people are ill-fed because *less than one per cent of the land is cultivated*. Although

Paraguay has more land than money, one-fourth of all money spent abroad goes to import wheat, flour, sugar, butter and cheese while her own acres lie idle.

I began to think it might be a pretty good idea to take that farm and send home for some hybrid seed corn, chickens and a purebred bull. With 99 per cent of Paraguay's wealth coming from the soil, there is no doubt but what the farmer is, or should be, the backbone of the country. Of course "farmer" as an Illinois farmer understands the word, is an exaggeration. The Paraguayan farmer scratches a few plots of ground around his hut with his wooden plow drawn by oxen. On his one to five acres (as close as most get to their 120-acre share) he grows cotton and tobacco to sell; corn, beans, mandioca and rice to eat.

In front of one of these farm huts, I saw a woman puffing a long cigar and pounding corn. So I whoaed my donkey for a visit. José, the head of the house, was an average farmer who lives with his wife and sons in a typical mud-plastered hut topped with straw. He rents six acres of land, pays 65 cents an acre. (He complained that the rent was high because his fields border on the main highway.) He showed me his little patch of corn; the mixed white and yellow nubbins would make a Hoosier corn king snicker, but they were vital food for this family. José had a little sugar cane to provide sugar for the family, forage for his oxen—and rum for himself. A patch of beans, a few stalks of bananas, several pineapples and some mandioca were scattered haphazardly about the little place. Cotton was his cash crop. And one of the boys showed me the family pig. It was tied up with a string to a stake, waiting for its first birthday when it would be taken to market; pork is too expensive to fit into José's family budget.

José's señora showed me the house—both rooms—as she chewed banker-fashion on the cigar stuck in the corner of her mouth. The dirt floor was neatly swept and bright magazine ads and pictures decorated the mud walls. When the weather is bright she cooks over an open fire outside, balancing her pots on a couple of rocks. When it rains—and it pours often—she cooks in the kitchen, still over an open fire. There is no

chimney so the kitchen takes on the atmosphere of a farmer's smokehouse. Back of the house is the oven, a mound of mud bricks. A fire is built inside this oven to heat it; then the hot coals are raked out and Mrs. José shoves in her corn meal concoctions to bake.

Friendly neighbors? They have them in Paraguay, too. For when I asked about the siesta, the señora thought I was sleepy. She brought out a pair of clean sheets—obviously saved for company since they never use them on their sleeping mats—and spread them for me beneath the mango tree. And when she offered me a glass of water from the open hole back of the house, I found jasmine flowers floating on top—a mark of



Cigar-Smoking Woman. Women in the rural areas smoke long cigars and most of them "roll their own". This is Mrs. José, using one of the most popular kitchen utensils, a hollowed-out tree trunk.



Well Is Hole in Ground. One reason for many tropical diseases is lack of sanitation. The open well is common. José draws water which his wife carries in a common earthen-ware jug, balanced on her head. I was offered a drink of it—with jasmine flowers floating on top as a mark of respect.

respect paid to a distinguished guest. (They'll put jasmine flowers between the sheets if you stay all night.) These folks live in houses of mud, sticks and straw, and do not know how to read or write, but their neighborliness comes from the heart.

A leading doctor told me the health of the people is bad because of poor diet. Tuberculosis is common and many youngsters have lost their teeth. They cannot afford meat and eggs, and a cow is something to pull a wagon. As for milk and butter—I sometimes wonder if they have ever discovered the cow's most important secret. The doctor went on to say that when the farmers get paid for their cotton¹ they have money, but not very much and not very long.

¹ Cotton is the cash crop for the average farmer. Exports in 1938 consisted of cotton, 26.6 per cent; beef products, 22 per cent; quebracho extract, 18.4 per cent; cattle hides, 11.5 per cent; maté, 7 per cent.

They invite their neighbors to parties, enjoy meat three times a day. They have music; and it is not unusual to see a barefoot fellow twanging a native harp, sometimes using a big toe on the bass strings. They dance the polka, play cards, shoot firecrackers and get happy on *caña*, a strong drink made from sugar cane. And after the money is all gone, they wait for next year's cotton crop.

Doctor's services are luxuries and dentists are unheard of. But José has one consolation. He need not worry about coats and shoes for the kiddies; Paraguay is two-thirds within the torrid zone and has barefoot weather the year around.

Experts who have diagnosed Paraguayan ills say that the farmers should not put all of their eggs in one basket. Yet they are doing that increasingly with cotton, one of the most highly competitive raw materials in the world. The farmer faces many obstacles in selling cotton. Inferior seed and primitive agricultural methods result in low yields. It rains too much at the wrong time. Inadequate transportation means cotton is shipped to Asunción by oxcart. In Asunción it is subject to a port tax (to pay an American firm for building this port in boom times) and an export tax. The freight rates down the river on Argentine boats are unjustly high. So if the Paraguayan farmer gets any money out of his cotton with which to celebrate, it seems to be a just cause for celebration. And the price of two cents a pound set by the government, is not enough to make these sad people very glad.

"Oh, a hardware store!" I exclaimed as I walked into a building in Asunción and saw lines of one-row plows, planters and cultivators.

"No, no! This is the Ministry of Agriculture," was the quick reply of my friend. The government had imported this machinery as part of a plan to mechanize agriculture. Farm mechanization in Paraguay, he hastened to add, means one mule and a one-row planter, cultivator and plow. The farmers have few of these now.

Along with most other Latin American countries, Paraguay has grievously neglected her one source of wealth. The thought of having schools to teach agriculture, forestry and



Mandioca for Tapioca. José shows the big starchy root which furnishes his family with much of its food. This tuber is a big producer, and some yields go as high as 100 tons to the acre. There's no hurry about harvest, you dig the roots when you get around to it.

animal husbandry was regarded as a waste of money. Educated people hold down white-collar positions and are gentlemen; and gentlemen do not do manual labor, so ran the reasoning. It has been impossible to develop a continuous plan through the Ministry of Agriculture because ministers are frequently changed overnight.

However, today Paraguay is gradually giving more attention to this neglected field. An agricultural bank of credit has been established to provide a few chosen farmers with funds to mechanize. These farmers will set up demonstration farms to show others what can be done, and make them a little envious. They will also produce good seed which in turn will be distributed to other farmers. A national college of agriculture has just been opened to all boys who wish to take advanced work. Even though it charges no tuition, its enrollment in 1941 was only 80. Boys who are ambitious still want to be lawyers or generals, not farmers.



Cotton Is Competitive Crop. Paraguayan farmers face many obstacles in selling cotton, their chief export crop. These boys pick cotton while the dew is still on—before the sun gets too hot. Then they have the job of drying out the cotton.

Tobacco, once the chief export crop, has declined steadily. Farmers now grow little more than they smoke. But that's no small item in Paraguay where both men and women smoke cigars. A typical sight in this picturesque country is that of a tiny burro jogging along, piled high with produce for market. Perched among the bags is the burro's mistress, a black umbrella in one hand, a baby in her arm and a six-inch cigar in her mouth.

And why not? After all, this has not been called "Land of Women" without reason—after the terrible war of 1865-70 there were seven women to every man. To understand this country, you must know something about that war and Paraguayan history.

When the Spaniards sailed up the Paraguay River in the 1530's and founded Asunción, this region was the private preserve of the fierce Guaraní Indians. But for some unusual

reason these Indians and the equally tough Spaniards lived together peacefully instead of fighting. Unlike our North American ancestors who brought their good wives along when they came to the New World, the Spaniards had a habit of traveling alone. It was easier to take their women from the Indians—and that they did in Paraguay, making the bulk of the population a fusion of Guaraní and Spanish blood. That combination spawned an aggressive people ready to fight at the drop of a hat.

Along with other Latin American countries, Paraguay threw off the Spanish yoke in 1811, only to be collared by three dictators in succession. The first of these was Francia, who called himself *El Supremo* and ruled from 1814-40. He was so powerful, it is said, that he rode by the Cathedral in his carriage every Sunday morning at five minutes past ten.



Burro Has His Burden. The tiny burro carries his mistress and all of the goods which she has to swap to the village market. She rides "side-saddle" quite easily—it isn't far to the ground if she should fall off.

Mass began at ten, but before these people went into the church they always turned their backs on the Cathedral to watch *El Supremo* go by. That's how important Francia was—he came before God.

But death finally stopped the supremacy of *El Supremo*. Carlos López, a law professor, took over after Francia's death and formed a liberal government. In the years between 1840-62, Paraguay rebounded from its terrified isolation to become one of the most progressive countries on the continent. It became a center of culture. The treasury was filled. An enlightened system of courts was formed. And in 1842, López abolished slavery with a simple law that "All children born to slaves within the boundaries of Paraguay after this date shall be free."

Paraguay was headed for a dominant role in South American affairs when the elder López died in 1862. He was succeeded by his son, Francisco López, who had been studying in France. There he had acquired Napoleonic dreams of empire and a French mistress, Ella Lynch, who soon became the directing force behind the new dictator. Paraguay's army was the best in the continent. López knew it—and that brought war.

The Paraguayan army marched across neutral Argentina to stop Brazil from picking on little Uruguay. That fact, paradoxically, provoked a war which pitted Paraguay against the Triple Alliance of Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay. For five years the Paraguayans, led by López, fought with fanatical bravery against the combined armies of the three nations. But it was national suicide and when López was killed in the final battle in 1870, the country was utterly ruined.

When she went to war, Paraguay had a population of 1,337,000 and was one of the most prosperous countries in South America. At the war's end, only 28,000 old men remained in all Paraguay; there were fewer than 200,000 women and children. The remainder—five-sixths of the population—had fallen in battle or from disease. Industry had been abandoned. Agriculture had stopped. Cattle and horses had nearly all been killed. There were no men left to cultivate the



Paraguayan Girls Are Pretty. I was told that Paraguay is a "land of pretty girls and cigar-smoking women". Here is one of the pretty girls in native costume, and the bare feet are a part of it all.



Paraguayan Girls Are Pretty. I was told that Paraguay is a "land of pretty girls and cigar-smoking women". Here is one of the pretty girls in native costume, and the bare feet are a part of it all.

land. Hopeless despair settled on the people. From that war Paraguay has never recovered.

The seven-women-to-one-man ratio at the close of the war meant that the women did most of the work, and the law of supply and demand made men popular. Even today (the proportions are about 60-40 because of the thousands of men lost in the recent Chaco War) the women still hustle around to do their master's bidding. So it is always the women who ride the burros to market; it is the women who carry heavy loads of produce on their heads; it is the women who take care of the house and work in the fields.

I asked a Paraguayan about it. "Men not many. Women work hard to get man," was his logical answer. So it seems only fair that these women, as long as they do a man's work, are entitled to the hitherto masculine privilege of smoking cigars. Besides, they roll their own.

José and his Señora have a pretty tough life I decided after seeing what they have to do—and to do with. Even a taxless farm, a siesta every afternoon and bananas in the backyard could scarcely make their life glamorous. But an agricultural official did know of something in which there was a great future—the cattle business.

"Some day Paraguay will be the source of great quantities of canned beef and beef extract," he declared. "This is a real cattle country. You could do much with American methods." And a Swedish cattleman added, for what it was worth, "What this country needs is 50,000 Yanks—to develop the land."

Most of the Paraguayan cattle are a mongrel, all-purpose breed which must produce beef, pull carts and withstand ticks. A few purebred cattle and Indian humpbacked Zebus have been imported recently. Big ranchers, some owning more than a million acres, control most of the industry's five million cattle. Two *Norteamericanos* have scored real successes in the cattle business. Peons on these ranches get little except their food, and not too much of that.

My friend in the agricultural ministry was optimistic about increasing beef production "when we adopt American methods." (He was educated in the U. S.) He pointed out that

vast amounts of cheap land are available; native grasses in the Chaco are lush; taxation is negligible (3 cents a head); weather is mild for year-around grazing with no winter shelter required; and the Paraguayans make good cattlemen. They start young for it is a common practice for godfathers to present calves to newborn babies. That accounts for the quarter of a million different brands registered with the government.

Obviously, Paraguayans do not pay much attention to other livestock. According to 1937 governmental estimates, there were only 25,000 hogs in the entire country—one hog for each 40 people.

You've heard of the Gran Chaco. One slice of it forms the undeveloped western half of Paraguay. This cattle country is home for 20,000 uncivilized Indians, wild pigs and jaguars. I was told the story of a Texan who came to the Chaco years



Country Home. This is a typical rural hut with thatched roof, dirt floors. The smoke coming out the door means they cook over an open fire. Paraguayans are good cattle men because it is a common practice for godfathers to give calves to all new-born babies.

ago, took a native wife and turned loose a few pigs he had brought along. Today this Texan's descendants hunt wild boars. Much of this vast sweep of rolling plains is undeveloped and some of it is still unexplored. Yet it was over the boundaries of this Chaco that Paraguay bled in war most recently, 1932-35, this time against equally impoverished Bolivia. Another conflict, more men killed, more expenses for an already exhausted, poverty-stricken people!

They have some hard wood in the Chaco forests, so hard it is called *quebracho* (literally, axe-breaker). One-fifth of the world's supply of the *quebracho* extract used to tan hides and leather comes from Paraguay. (Argentina furnishes the rest.)



Drinking Maté. This popular tea has remarkable health-giving qualities, say all of these folks who drink it. The little hollow gourd which this woman holds is called a *maté*. Her sipper is a *bombilla*. These folks would rather go without a meal than without yerba *maté*.

Big companies, most of them Argentine-controlled, dominate this industry and Paraguayans see few profits.

Whether you are thirsty or not, in Paraguay you drink yerba maté. It is more than a thirst quencher. From peon to president, Paraguayans claim this beverage has remarkable health-giving qualities—double the “refreshing lift” claimed by certain of our soft drink advertisers. Because of its stimulating effect on the mind and muscles, maté was given to the French, British and German armies in World War I.

It has been estimated there are 10 million maté drinkers in Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, Chile and Paraguay. Consumption is 35 pounds per capita in Paraguay alone. Maté, often called Paraguayan tea, grows in wild forests covering thousands of acres in Paraguay, southern Brazil and northern Argentina. The wax-like leaves are stripped from the small tree, dried over a fire and pounded into coarse powder preparatory to drinking.

Drinking maté is as essential in this part of the world as eating and sleeping. The ground tea leaves are put into a little gourd called a maté (that's where the tea gets its name), and hot or cold water is added. The imbiber sips this liquid nourishment through a tube inserted into the gourd; a strainer on the bottom of the tube helps keep the leaves out of the drinker's mouth.

Many times in friendly circles the gourd is passed from one person to another. Indeed, as one Paraguayan expresses it: “Lovers (a romantic application of this old popular custom was inevitable) drink the tea through the same little tube from the same gourd, giving themselves the impression of kissing one another indirectly.”

Although small amounts of maté have been sold in the United States for years, it has never caught the popular fancy. Before the war we spent our \$30,000,000 for tea in the Far East. But now new efforts are being made to make us maté conscious. The question of “Why go half way around the world when we have something just as good (or better)?

in the Americas?" is now being asked us by the National Matte Institute of Brazil.²

Other things are found in the forests of Paraguay. Cooks will be interested in the cinnamon bark and vanilla beans. From the leaves of a bitter-orange tree is extracted petit-grain oil—sweet-smelling oil that comes only from Paraguay and is used in flavors and perfumes. Then there is the palm tree that dots the fields and yields small fruits the size of a jaw breaker. From its seeds is extracted a fine coconut oil.³ What will interest children more is the fact that oranges grow wild almost everywhere and parrots and monkeys are common, too.

Paraguay is entirely dependent upon her soil. She lacks coal and oil. Deposits of iron ore, copper and manganese exist but there are no mines. An iron foundry was working before the 1865-70 war but not today. Industry is confined to the simple processing of raw materials: Making *quebracho* extract, packing meat, ginning cotton and milling yerba maté. A few small shops make cotton textiles, matches, cigarettes, soaps and wines.

Paraguayan women are justly famous for making dainty "spiderweb" lace, a household industry handed down from one generation to the next. Every time a *Norteamericano* comes to town, the makers of this lace camp on his trail until he buys. One woman sat on the steps of my hotel for hours every day, eating her lunch there, waiting specifically to show me samples of her "very fine" lace. It was "very fine." I bargained with her and bought six pieces for 300 pesos—then wondered if this was a fair price.

There is no capital quite like Asunción, this 404-year-old city of 90,000 people. It has a sky line of windmills because it has no water system; no sewage disposal system either. The wide streets are paved with uneven rocks, and taxi

² The National Matte Institute of Brazil is trying to increase the sales of maté in the United States, pointing out that in 1939 the United States bought only 102 thousand pounds of maté compared with almost 100 million pounds of tea. A carbonated soft drink and a whole-wheat bread, both maté flavored, have also been introduced.

³ Soap is made from some of this coconut oil. Hotels in Paraguay furnish soap, unlike those in Brazil where you furnish your own soap if you want to wash.

drivers have become expert at driving on the streetcar tracks. The hearse is hooked to the rear of a streetcar for Asunción funerals. You sip drinks out of real straws and sleep under mosquito netting. When I arrived one early afternoon, the store windows and doors were all covered and not a soul was to be seen. I thought the old town with grass growing in the streets must have been abandoned. But it was just siesta time. In Asunción, office hours run from 6:30 to 11:30 a. m.; people eat and sleep from 12 to 3 p. m., and in the evenings they have fun. Parties (at least the ones I went to during *Carnival* time) begin just before midnight and last until 5 a. m.

At the Colonial Hotel, next-to-the-best in town, I was told the rate for room with bath and five-course meals was "800 pesos a day." I was staggered and thought this must be a resort for the idle rich, until I changed a dollar into Paraguayan money; for one U. S. dollar I received 321 pesos. It's like playing bank with stage money. A classy haircut costs 35 "bucks" in their money, 14 cents in ours. Other prices are relative. A white collar clerk gets \$15 a month; a cabinet minister's salary is \$125 a month. (I was ashamed when I recalled that the 300 pesos which I had given the lace woman for her two weeks' work amounted to only 93 cents in our money.)

As I registered at the hotel, the manager brought out a newspaper and excitedly showed me the headline: "LLEGO HOY UN CONOCIDO PERIODISTA NORTEAMERICANO." The story told how "El señor John Stroh, redactor del periodico, 'The Prairie Farmer,' uno de los mas antiguos organos de la prensa de Chicago, EE UU y, a la vez, cronista de la popular estacion de radio americana WLS . . ." and so on in a one sentence story of 137 words.

The manager of a South American chain of short wave stations also saw the story and asked me to make the first broadcast to the United States over his new transmitter. Cabling WLS, the Prairie Farmer Station in Chicago, I rustled up a government official who spoke English, I translated my message into Spanish to be censored by the bureau of press and propaganda and climbed into a Model-A Ford.



Broadcasting by Short Wave. While the oxcarts rattled by, I made a shortwave broadcast from Asuncion, Paraguay, to WLS, Chicago, with Señor Menendez (center) from the Ministry of Agriculture. Señor Kamil, station manager, insisted that we try out his new station.

We rode out five miles into the country, honking oxcarts out of the way, steering around wandering cattle and scaring burros with their female riders. At the radio station in the corner of a pasture, as oxcarts lumbered by and women with baskets on their heads watched curiously, I sat down to do my first long distance broadcasting.

I said, "Hello America!" and wondered if those words would actually get out of the interior of the South American continent, across unexplored jungles, mountains and seas to the skyscraper district of Chicago. (After receiving my cable, Tommy Rowe, Chief Engineer of WLS, told his family he couldn't take them to the movie after all—he sat up twiddling his dials and recorded my message for rebroadcast to the people of the Middle West.)

I'll never forget the market in Asunción—several semi-officials put me out and threatened to arrest me for taking pictures. It was fascinating. Donkeys stood patiently while their mistresses haggled over prices and sipped maté. In between the piles of fruits, cigars, herbs and strings of meat was the cosmetic counter. One woman shifted her cigar long enough to test some rouge. Rouge and lipstick are the same, red paper which when wet gives off vivid red in the spot where it is wanted.

You have heard of the Good Neighbor? Well, Uncle Sam is trying to be one to Paraguay. The first real highway in the country was recently built with an American loan of \$3,500,000. Many native laborers pounded rocks for a few cents a day constructing this 110-mile asphalt road. It is a dandy for a country where the only roads were oxcart trails. The Brooklyn construction boss was proud of the road, too—so proud he laid down the edict of “no ox carts on this road.” But after seeing ox carts, hundreds of ox carts and hardly anything else in the rural areas except ox carts, it leaves one a bit puzzled as to who will use the road. Paraguay's 2,000 motor cars are mostly in Asunción.

Don't get the idea that this Good Neighbor policy is all one-sided. The people of Paraguay have made a hero of a United States president whom most of us have forgotten. Rutherford B. Hayes is the man. He settled a boundary dispute in the 1880's which gave Paraguay her slice of the Chaco. And now the President Hayes Football Club is taking up a freewill offering in the poorest section of Asunción to build a suitable memorial to the Yankee they all revere. Paraguayans do not forget easily. They probably will not easily forget that American Minister, either—the fellow who made a habit of becoming inebriated in the streets of the capital and who, on one of his sprees, was incarcerated. (That's diplomatic language for recording the fact he was dead drunk and tossed into jail.)

Despite an increasing feeling of neighborliness between the United States and Paraguay, Paraguay is more of a stranger to us than any nation in the Americas. For one thing our trade with Paraguay is smallest. Our main purchases are

canned beef and *quebracho* extract; in 1938 this added up to only \$2,000,000. In return we sell machinery, autos, radios and refrigerators—but not very many.

Her isolated position makes trading difficult. Paraguay is practically lost in the squeeze between Brazil, Argentina and Bolivia, hemmed in by high mountains and impenetrable jungles. Not a single road nor railroad connects this country with Brazil or Bolivia. Her only outlet is by river boat or railroad to Buenos Aires, 950 miles away.

If a geographer had been hired to divide South America into nations, you can bet he would have tacked Paraguay on to the adjoining countries which touch the sea. But don't dare suggest that Paraguay "join" Argentina or Brazil. Paraguayans are fiercely nationalistic. And if they can arrest a fellow just for taking pictures of their market place, think what they might do to one who would sell their country down the river to a hated neighbor.

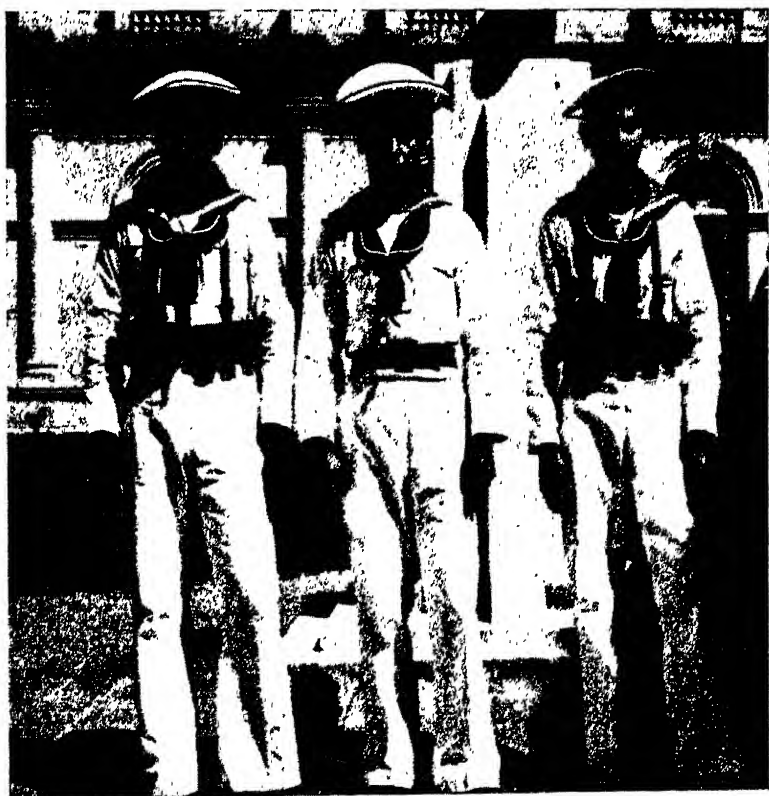
This country is dominated by Argentina. Land owned by Argentine citizens runs into millions of acres. Until recently, the Argentine peso circulated more readily than Paraguayan money. Argentina controls the railroad and river boat outlets. River freight rates are extremely high—it costs more to ship a cargo down the river to Buenos Aires than to send it from Buenos Aires to Europe. Argentina is Paraguay's biggest customer and furnishes the bulk of her imports. So this nation is dependent upon the whims of her big sister nation—the nation which Paraguay refused to join when the Spanish colonies broke free in 1811.

They tell the story of a Paraguayan being met at the Brazilian frontier. The Brazilian asked, "You are an ex-president of Paraguay?" Receiving a negative answer, the Brazilian asks again, "Then you must have been a cabinet officer." Again, the answer is negative and the Brazilian finally says comprehendingly, "What did you do—turn down the offer?"

Political changes come quickly and often in this unstable country. I asked about revolutions. "Revolutions, yes—but we have them now by telephone," a friend assured me. I was told there have been four presidents in the last four years, and

rumor of a fifth had cropped up several times. President is General Don Higinio Morínigo, a young army man in his late thirties. Although this country has a constitution and calls itself a republic it has no congress and the President, backed by the military, is a pretty good imitation of a dictator.

In 1938, 70 per cent of the total revenue of the country went to the armed forces; in 1939, 55 per cent. The president is a general, the cabinet officers are usually colonels, and so on down—that is one reason why half the budget goes to support the armed forces. It has always been hard to cut down the size of the army for once boys get away from the farms and are given food, clothing and shoes, they do not like to go



Land-Locked Navy. Paraguay is one of the two nations in South America which is completely land-locked. But she is proud of her navy and two gunboats which race each other up and down the river.

back to the wooden plow. This inland country is proud of her navy of 3,000 men and her two gunboats which race each other up and down the river.

The law says all children between the ages of seven and 14 must go to school. But three-fourths of the people have never been to any school simply because there are not enough schools or teachers. This sounds as if the government were highly neglectful of its citizens. But it is no easy task which faces the government. Paraguay's budget is the smallest of any Latin American republic—only \$2,300,000. And after the army takes its slice, little more than a million dollars is left to run a sovereign nation four times as big as Indiana. This state alone has more than 70 times that amount to spend.

Over and over again officials told me Paraguay is a paradise waiting for colonists to develop it. Settlements of Germans, Czechs, White Russians and Canadian Mennonites are scattered about the country. Plans to bring 3,000 farmers from the United States were dropped for some unexplained reason. Paraguay wants colonists—but not exploiters. A Swede who came here several years ago lamented the fact that he had amassed considerable property and "now I can't leave, dammit, because I can't take my land with me."

It is hard to be harsh with Paraguay, particularly if you know her past history and present problems. And Paraguayans have profound faith in their future. "I do not think there is any lack of modesty in saying that Paraguay is one of the lands magnificently gifted by the hand of the Creator," says Pablo M. Ynsfran.⁴ "We need in Paraguay a larger population and a greater appreciation on the part of foreign capital that the country affords rich opportunities. Once these are secured, Paraguay can look forward to her place in the sun and to her participation in those affairs of the world that make for human prosperity, universal peace and the general benefit of mankind."

Here's to the day when Paraguay finds her place in the sun.

⁴ "Bulletin of the Pan American Union", Pablo M. Ynsfran, former Chargé d'Affaires of Paraguay in Washington.

Paraguay At A Glance

- Size:* 175,000 square miles; size of California.
- People:* Less than a million; Indian-Spanish mixture; many speak Indian language.
- Capital:* Asunción. Population, 104,000.
- Sells:* Cotton, beef, quebracho, maté. Our trade with Paraguay is less than with any other Latin American nation.
- Buys:* Wheat, sugar, cotton, cloth, machinery, automobiles, petroleum products.
- Industry:* Nine-tenths of people depend on agriculture; less than 1 per cent of land is cultivated. Much timber, some unexplored jungle. No coal, no oil, no mining.

Agriculture is primitive; people very poor; illiteracy high; transportation inadequate; government has smallest budget in Latin America, only \$2,300,000. Government welcomes foreign capital and settlers.

III.

You'd Feel At Home in Uruguay

IF YOU'RE one of those people who sometimes say Paraguay when you mean Uruguay, you could be sued for slander—that's as bad as mixing up David with Goliath. For Uruguay is as progressive as Paraguay is primitive, and you can lay the adjectives on thick.

Several hours after I had jogged over oxcart ruts to the cow pasture airport on my way out of Paraguay, I was speeding along a paved highway through the rich Uruguayan countryside. Only a 100-mile strip of Argentine jungle separates these two countries. They are close, geographically speaking, but as far apart as the poles in progress.

You would like Uruguay. After eating corn on the cob, dodging traffic in Montevideo and hearing democracy argued at the crossroads, I thought surely this nation must be Uncle Sam's next door neighbor. It's more like home than any country in Latin America. Shucks, I passed for an Uruguayan—until I opened my mouth. Their three-year-olds spoke much better Spanish.

Uruguay (*Republica Oriental del Uruguay*, if you really want to be formal) stands out among all Latin American nations: It is one of the most progressive and most democratic. It has more automobiles per capita and more roads for its size. More of its people can read and write. Its standard of living ranks with the highest. And its social legislation makes our New Deal reforms seem like horse and buggy stuff. Democracy? Why, it is even a law that Uruguayans must vote!

For the average tourist who pays a guide 10 pesos for the privilege of "ooh"-ing and "ah"-ing at old ruins, picture postcard scenery and queer costumes, Uruguay is a wash-out.

It is too modern, too much like our own flat prairies, our cattle and cities. This is a white country; not more than a few dozen of its 2,150,000 people are Indian or Negro. The Indians fought back when the first Spaniards arrived and were killed off; and Negroes were never brought in to work for people who have always known how to work for themselves.

Uruguay is the smallest country in the continent, squashed between (and fought over by) the two biggest, Brazil and Argentina. It is only about the size of North Dakota but has remarkably little wasteland in its entire 72,153 square miles. City and rural areas are distinct. The city is Montevideo, capital and hub of the country, and home for a third of all the people. Outside this city is a vast meadow stretching over four-fifths of the country.

Practically all of this nation's wealth comes from cattle and sheep which graze the year around on lush native pastures (better than Argentina's), so rich they might even tempt our own corn-fed steers. Animal products comprise more than four-fifths of all exports; in 1940, wool alone accounted for 55 per cent of the entire export trade. This foreign trade is to Uruguay what wages are to a working man; when she exports wool and meat for good prices it means prosperity, not only for the farmers, but for the entire country.

When I say farmers, I do not mean common growers of corn and wheat. The *gauchos* would ride me down if I called them farmers. Of the farmable land, 92 per cent is in pasture. The typical Uruguayan is a man of the saddle; he loves his livestock and considers the growing of corn, wheat and flax an inferior sort of way to make a living. The government has had to do considerable prodding to get even seven per cent of the land into crops.

Cattle and sheep are the geese which lay the golden eggs in this country, so I hit out for the flat and treeless open spaces. In Uruguay this is no burro or oxcart jaunt; you casually catch a bus or train for practically any crossroads in the country. There are 22,000 miles of roads, 1,800 miles of railroads and 65,000 automobiles. Since I didn't own one of these cars I shared space in a bus.

(This Good Neighbor idea, just between you and me, is O. K. if one doesn't carry it too far. I'm afraid I did. Sitting by me was an Uruguayan woman with a crying baby; so good old Uncle John, who had been quite a hand with nephews and nieces, bounced the baby on his lap. It quit crying, all right. In fact, I soon had the whole bus load of people laughing. I had discovered a new market for United States manufacturers—the ones who make rubber pants for babies.)

All over Latin America governmental officials lifted their eyebrows at my unconventional way of walking in the rural areas without even a letter of introduction. But to get acquainted with the real people, you must get out where they are—and three-fourths of all Latin Americans live outside the city limits. No, I never carried a gun; not even a sling shot. And I didn't need any letter of introduction for farm people everywhere were just as curious about the *Norteamericano* as he was about them.

Take Rudolfo, for instance. Just as he was unyoking his oxen, I wandered in for a visit and to have a look at his sod hut—the typical farmer's home in Uruguay. Lumber is a luxury; about the only trees are those that man has planted, usually scattered groves of eucalyptus used for shade, lumber and fence posts. So Rudolfo showed me how he cut blocks of sod and laid them to form the foot-thick walls of his house. The roof was thatched with giant broom straws as thick as your little finger. Some houses are made of mud bricks; straw and grass are tramped into the mud by cattle and horses to make the bricks hang together. But Rudolfo prefers sod.

My camera soon attracted two hair-ribboned little girls who peeked around the corner of the house. And Mrs. Rudolfo in her calico dress brought me some maté. They were so hospitable that I overreached, and my limping Spanish got me in trouble again. With arm-waving gestures I tried to get over the idea that I was interested in homelife, that I wanted to see the *cochina* where they cook their meals. That was the wrong thing to say evidently; Rudolfo looked as if he wanted to smack me down. And I couldn't blame him because my little Spanish dictionary revealed the right word for kitchen is



Sod Blocks Make Fine Home. This is Rudolfo and his family, posing in front of their home. It is thatched with straw, has dirt floors and walls, but everything is neat as a pin inside. And Rudolfo says the sod blocks keep it very cool in summer, warm in winter.



Open Air Oven. Maria's job is to build a fire in the mud oven. Then when the inside is heated up, she rakes out the coals, and her mother puts in the dough to bake. Maria shows the elongated pancake turner used to put in and take out the loaves.

cocina. I had said *cochina* which means sow—and even hints of a dirty old pig pen.

Then they laughed at the apologetic *Norteamericano*, and showed me the *cocina*. The señora cooks on a range but does the baking in an outside oven made of mud bricks. Maria showed me how she keeps a fire burning briskly inside the oven. When the bricks are red hot, her Mamma takes an overgrown pancake turner with a broomstick handle, rakes out the coals and puts in the dough to bake on the hot stones. (I noticed that in between baking days, chickens roost in the oven.)

The inside walls of the house were plastered smooth with mud and whitewashed. The floors were of hard-packed dirt; it is amazing how clean dirt floors can be. The only light for

the three rooms came through the open door. Rudolfo assured me the sod walls made the house very warm in winter and as cool as a cellar in summer. Maybe an interior decorator wouldn't have felt at home, but I did.

"Say, this is a dandy steak," I remarked between mouthfuls to a friend in Montevideo. (It was good, but then I was almost hungry enough to eat shoe leather at 10:30 p. m.—an hour and a half before midnight is a common supper hour in Uruguay.) "Yes, sir, this beef is very good!"

"Then why doesn't the U. S. buy it?" he came back. Beef is a sore point in Argentina and Uruguay. The Uruguayans like us. They buy our machines and automobiles. The government is even willing to give us military bases. But they get confounded mad when the beef subject comes up because we refuse to buy fresh beef. The United States has a law forbidding the importation of fresh meat from any country which has hoof and mouth disease, for fear the disease will be transmitted to our own herds.

But the average Uruguayan man on a horse believes that "politics," not fear of disease, keeps fresh meat out of the United States. Many think that all of us are underfed because of it. (I was skinny enough to make them certain of it.) Our attitude makes them mad for several reasons: Uruguay must export to live, and three-fourths of all animal products are exported. This country has ordinarily bought much more from us than she has sold to us. Just as important, too, is the Uruguayan pride in their cattle.

A visit to an exclusively purebred estancia (that means ranch, and a big one) showed me just how proud they are. Sócrates Rodríguez, *director de agronomía*, must have seen in me a prospective convert when he heard I represented a farm paper "in enemy beef territory." So he insisted I take his car, chauffeur and livestock chief and go to Cerros de San Juan, a 20,000-acre estancia with 4,500 purebred Herefords and 6,000 sheep.

It was no sod hut that this third-generation English *estanciero* lived in. His home was a real castle in the country, partially covered by great flowering vines set in the midst of landscaped gardens, palms and flowers. First we had some-



Prize Bull. Four-fifths of Uruguay's export wealth comes from her cattle and sheep. This prize bull belongs to Cerros de San Juan, a 20,000-acre estancia with 4,500 purebred Herefords. Uruguayans are born livestock men—they look down on anyone who tills the soil for a living.

thing to eat. Steak, of course, an inch and a half thick—sort of an introduction to this beef business. Then in a Model-T Ford we drove through pasture after pasture of fine cattle. The gauchos had evidently been given orders to round them up so they would show off well. They did. In one lot we saw 500 two-year-old bulls grazing in the rich native grasses—bulls soon to be sold at auction for \$200 each. In another pasture was the same number of heifers. On and on we drove from field to field.

This *estanciero* would modestly say "Here are a few cattle," but that look in his eyes said, "If the United States would buy beef like this, you wouldn't be so lean." Since he weighed 260 pounds and I a mere 140, I didn't dare say, "A centavo for your thoughts."

But then came a convenient interruption—and I almost got my Mom something to make over last year's hat into a new Easter bonnet. A huge bird jumped up and started loping across the field. I knew at once what it was, recalling the

time an ostrich raced a horse at the county fair. So I was all for running it down to get a feather. But my host explained that these birds can run 45 miles an hour; and we were equipped with only a Model-T. The *rhea* is a member of the ostrich family. It wanders around in the meadows, eats grass and lays eggs the size of young watermelons.

We spent the entire afternoon seeing every last one of those 4,500 Herefords—all as pretty as the pictures you see on calendars. It would make our old-time cowboys kick off their boots in the grave if they knew it, but cattle and sheep run together on the same pastures. And from casual observation I would say that they seem to be getting along O. K. The cattle eat the high grass and the sheep peacefully munch along behind.

Three-fourths of the eight million cattle are Herefords. This breed does better on plain pasture than do Shorthorns, the Argentine choice. Angus? Nope, they shook their heads at this question. "It takes fancy feeds like corn to fit the Angus for market." Herefords need no pampering, have only what they can glean from year around grazing. No winter shelter is required here because it seldom frosts. From the time the calf quits sucking until it goes to the slaughter-house as a four-year-old, it has an exclusive diet of native pasture with only an infrequent bit of oats or Sudan grass in the winter. Alfalfa seems to be reserved for neighboring Argentina.



Herefords Are Favorite Breed. This breed does better on the rich native pastures of Uruguay than any other. Cattle graze 12 months of the year, need no winter shelter, and sell for as low as two or three cents a pound.

The quality of the cattle is uniformly pretty good. An organization of farmers called "Asociacion Rural del Uruguay" encourages purebred livestock by giving 10 pesos for every purebred calf; 2.50 pesos for every pedigreed lamb.¹ (A peso is worth about 40 cents.) The range cattle are shipped to a central market when they're three to four years old and weigh about 1,100 pounds. The government requires that all the cattle pass through a central market where the weighing and selling is supervised.

A few years ago howls went up from cattlemen that the English and two United States packing houses—"trusts" they were called—were not giving fair prices. So the government built its own packing plant. Today the government packing house slaughters more cattle than any of the others, controlling the entire domestic market.

The top price for steers? Farmers, get a good hold on your rocking chair, and take the pipe out of your mouth so you won't bite the stem in two! A good price for a 1,100 pound steer is \$25, or less than 2½ cents a pound in our money. (At this writing market price of cattle in the United States is 16 cents a pound.) And how do they do it? Simple! Land is cheap, wages low, taxes non-existent. They let the calves suck for a year and then turn them out to grass for two or three years more.

But now to the bogeyman of the South American beef business: Uruguay has hoof and mouth disease—has so much of it that practically no steps have been taken to eradicate it. Scientists say this disease can be transmitted in the fresh meat carcass, particularly in the bones. But Uruguayans who believe that boned-out cuts of meat do not carry the germ had this alternative to suggest: Allow boned-out cuts of meat to enter the United States for manufacturing purposes. This could put fine quality meats in our bologna, would provide an outlet for surplus Uruguayan beef and would not affect the American carcass trade.

An American meat packer and long-time resident declared "If we could find some way of taking a small percentage of

¹ In 1937, there were 59,000 purebred Herefords, and 14,000 purebred Shorthorns on Uruguayan estancias.



Wool Brings in Most Money. Cattle and sheep graze together on the same estancias. Biggest single export from this country is wool—in 1940, it accounted for 55% of the total exports.

beef from Uruguay and Argentina, it would bind those countries more closely to us than volumes of Good Neighbor talk. And, moreover, the entire amount of meat we would have to import would not supply the beef trade of the United States for more than one day." (I was to hear much more about this controversial question in Argentina.)

But let's change the subject to sheep. After all, the biggest single export from this country is wool. When you see grazing cattle, you also know that sheep, like Mary's little lamb, can't be far behind—18 million of them, mostly Lincolns, Romney Marshes and Merinos. World War II has hiked the price of wool; American buyers have assured temporary prosperity for this nation by taking practically all of the Uruguayan wool crop.

The 26,000 estancias in Uruguay are small compared with those of Argentina; the 1937 census shows they average only 1,350 acres. About half of these ranches are owner-operated, although the government has control of a great deal of land through its mortgage bank. Most of them are more or less

self-contained units; the working families live on the place, raising a few food crops to eat while taking care of the cattle and sheep.

Cerros de San Juan is exceptionally large. "We have about 100 families on the place," the *estanciero* told me. "The law requires us to pay all men over the age of 18 at least 35 pesos a month (about \$14). We also give them a little house and some ground for a garden." This estancia had its own machinery shop, its own blacksmith shop, makes its own furniture and has two schools supported by the government.

As a sideline, the *estanciero* produces wine. Willows are grown for the picking baskets and cork trees have been planted with the idea of getting stoppers for the bottles. Wine is the national drink. Eleven hundred *bodegas* in Uruguay make 18 million gallons of it each year. It's simple arithmetic to divide that by two million people (leaving out the babies). That makes nine gallons of wine for every man, woman and child in the country.

An Uruguayan friend who wanted me to get the feel of the country by the "When-in-Rome-do . . ." method said, "Wine—it is the national drink. You must have some!" Half an hour later we saw a group of gauchos sipping maté from their gourds. "Ah, maté—it is the national drink. You must have some!" And that evening as we were returning to Montevideo we saw a group of men having a nip of *caña*. "Ah, *caña*, it is also the national drink—you must have some!" But *caña* is strong stuff; I declined and stuck to National Drinks No. 1 and 2.

In addition to their nine-gallon quotas of wine, the men of the open country drink maté. Meat and maté—if the average Uruguayan has them, he's well-fed. And the maté is no less important than the meat. The first thing they do when they get up, the last thing before going to bed—they drink maté. I heard stories of the endurance that this health-giving beverage gives to the man in the saddle; stories of maté-drinking men 70 years old who are still veritable Don Juans among the fairer sex. At social gatherings in the rural areas or even corner grocery store discussions, one of these little gourds filled with maté is passed around from person to per-

son. First one sips a bit and then he passes it on to the next. However, the trend is toward individual sippers. "We've learned about germs," explained my friend.

You'd expect these people to be meat eaters, and they are. The *gauchos* are said to eat 4½ pounds of meat daily. But not beef; beef is for sale. These fellows eat mutton. On some estancias the worker has his own flock of sheep for food; the size of the flock of sheep depends upon the size of his flock of children. There is no refrigeration in the rural areas; livestock is butchered one day, eaten the next. The national dish is *puchero*, a dinner all cooked in the same pot—roasting ears, cabbage, potatoes, carrots and a good sized hunk of meat. It's like a New England boiled dinner.

It was March when I visited this country and the poor people of Uruguay were just gathering their winter firewood



Wine Is National Drink. These grapes will go into wine, a favorite drink. A total of 1100 bodegas make 18 million gallons of wine each year in Uruguay. That makes about nine gallons for each man, woman and child.

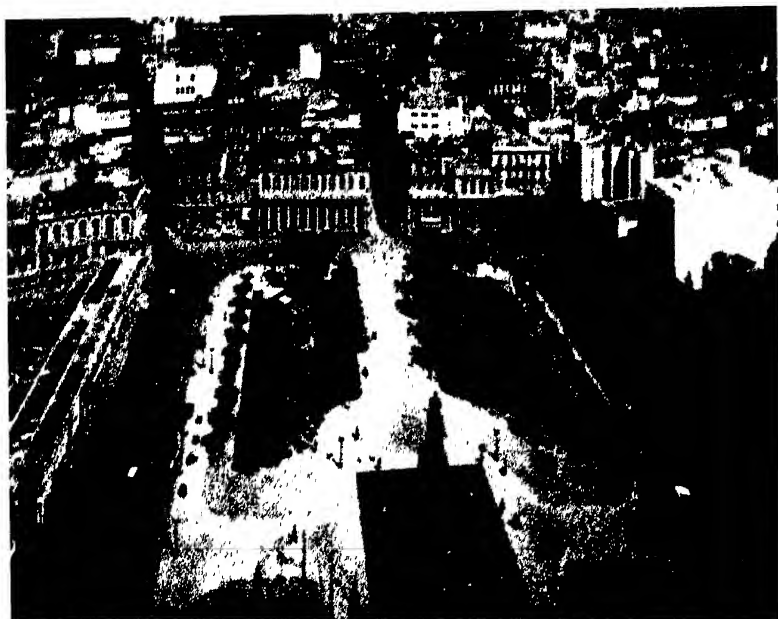
—piles of cow dung in the pasture were picked up and stacked for winter use. That's because wood is so scarce and Uruguay has no coal or oil. These "chips" are used for heating and for cook wood.

I was the third consecutive son in a farm home where there were hired hands to feed, babies to take care of, water to pump and more work than one woman should do. So my brothers looked down upon me with pitying glances as they took teams and went to the field—I had to stay home and help Mom with the dishes. And that's exactly the way the Uruguayan cattle and sheepmen look down upon the farmers who grow crops.

Despite government encouragement, only one out of every 20 acres is put in crops—mostly wheat, corn and flax. Formerly Uruguay imported all of her wheat, but the government thought the bread bill was too high and encouraged local wheat production. Enough wheat is grown now to make the daily bread, but the government set a price of 89 cents a bushel in 1940 to make it pay. The half million acres of corn average only 10 bushels to the acre. Uncle Sam buys most of Uruguay's flaxseed. In addition to these crops, farmers grow apples, oranges, grapes, sunflowers and even have 19,000 acres of birdseed. (They have plenty of birds to feed; Uruguay is an Indian word meaning "land of birds.")

The yoke of oxen is still standard equipment upon these farms. But the government has encouraged the use of farm machinery by bringing it in duty-free. Special credits are given to farmers and seed loans are made after crop failures. The government has been unusually far-sighted about the agriculture and livestock which has brought wealth to Uruguay.

Uruguay has no coal, iron or oil which means she will never have great industrial centers. Nevertheless, the government has encouraged the establishment of small industries. The 1936 industrial census proudly lists 11,470 manufacturing establishments employing 90,000 people. Wages for these workers average about \$200 a year. The government itself is big business—all forms of insurance, banking, electricity, telephones, cement, alcohol and petroleum are government



Montevideo Is Modern. A third of all Uruguayans live in the capital city. This is quite a tourist center because the climate is "best in South America", so the tourist bureau assured me. The government owns the resort hotels, collects money from gambling for charity.

monopolies. The government operates hotels, owns a radio station, runs a packing plant and a night club and controls important chunks of land through its mortgage bank.

Montevideo is really a wide-open city—a law says all buildings must be 13 feet back of the property line in town, 33 feet back in the suburbs. That makes for more lawns, gives the kids room to play. This ordinance even requires that artistic fences be built around vacant lots. (How I wish the Chicago city fathers would get ideas like that.) Because of the average Uruguayan's love for the country, this city has many parks. El Prado is so famous for its rose garden with 800 different varieties that Montevideo has often been called the "City of Roses."

Uruguay gets money from sheep and cattle, and also from its climate—"best in South America," the tourist bureau assured me. It's not too hot or too cold. January is the hottest month with a 74 degree average; June, the coolest, with 54 degrees. It never snows and seldom frosts. And that's what brings many people from Brazil and Argentina to idle away time on the numerous beaches; Montevideo has more beaches than Atlantic City. The government has built swanky mod-

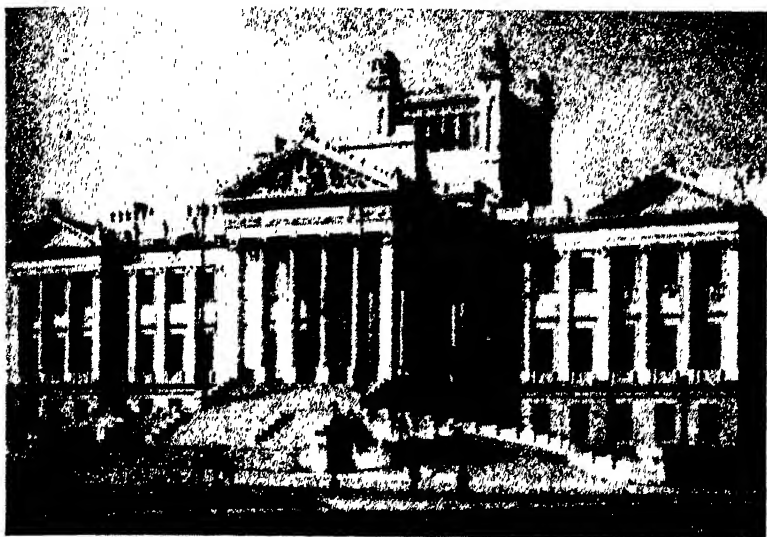
ernistic hotels along these beaches and set up casinos where people can lose a dime or a dollar in a hurry—profits from this gambling goes into the municipal treasury for charity and public works.

This climate was welcome after the smothering heat of Brazil and Paraguay (despite gloating reports sent to my snowbound folks at home). It must have its effect on these people for they do not even have time for siestas. They're go-getters. That also applies to their driving. These motorists would out-bluff a Chicago cab driver. It is especially nerve-racking because they drive on the left side of the street; if you're not careful they'll sneak up on your blind side.

Montevideo might also be called the Reno of South America; it is about the only city where you can get a divorce. In Uruguay, church and state were separated about 30 years ago; divorces have been legal ever since. A sprinkling of emancipated Argentines come over to Montevideo for their divorces, but the papers don't "Winchell" these newsbits because Latin Americans feel divorces are unworthy of news; a man's personal habits are his own. Catholicism is less strong here than in any other Latin American country.

Other points about Montevideo: It was the first city on the continent to have electric lights; it has 42 radio stations and 227 sunshiny days a year; and you have breakfast in bed. Not because you're lazy, but because that's where they serve it in the hotels. You just say "*Café completo*" into the telephone and up comes a pot of coffee and an equal amount of milk to be mixed into *café con leche*. By the way, Uruguay is one of the few countries where it is possible to get pasteurized milk.

Independence Day is celebrated but not with firecrackers. There is very little gift exchanging at Christmas. All children, if they are good and mind their mothers, receive gifts from the "Three Wise Men" when they pass along the streets the night of January 6th. But when Carnival time comes along these people go "all-out" for fun. For an entire month they whoop it up, dress up in fancy costumes, have parties, stage street dances, give plays and spray perfume out of little squirt guns. Carnival in these South American countries is all of our



Center of Democracy. In the Uruguayan Congress can be heard many debates because this nation has one of the best claims in the world to being a democracy. Not only can people vote, they're compelled to by law.

holidays in one. I witnessed enough merrymaking in Brazil, Paraguay, Argentina and Uruguay to feel like a Hallowe'en witch myself.

Uruguayans had a little fun when Big Neighbor Argentina banned Charlie Chaplin's film, "The Great Dictator." The picture was shown in the little Uruguayan town of Colonia across the River Plata, and boat excursions were run from Buenos Aires over to see the movie. Boat fare included the price of the movie.

Of the 20 Latin American Republics, Uruguay has one of the best claims to being a democracy. Not only can people vote, they're compelled to by law. And women vote, too—an almost unheard of occurrence in Latin America. It's so much like our own country that they are even complaining about political job holders.

Uruguay has had its troubles: For nearly three centuries her two big jealous neighbors have been scrapping over this strategic bit of rolling wealth. One Uruguayan friend confided that "some day I'm afraid we will be part of Argentina." Early Spanish and Portuguese settlers opened the battle for

this country; then after Argentina and Brazil became free of their European landlords, each decided that Uruguay should belong to her.

But Uruguay had a George Washington—José Artigas—who stuck up for a free country. (The Argentines still call him a robber.) Finally in 1828, Uruguay became independent. Independence didn't bring peace, however. This was a regular hornet's nest of fighting until 1900, stirred up by the knock-down-drag-out fights of the opposing political parties. The Colorados (meaning reds, but no relation to the Communists) were liberals; the Blancos (whites) were conservatives. They fought each other just to be different.

It took a great man to put all this energy to work. Uruguay elected him to the presidency in 1904. And to José Battle y Ordóñez goes much of the credit for Uruguay's position today. As editor of the leading paper, a two-term president and champion of democracy, he put the scrapping energy of Uruguayans in a progressive groove. Here is some of the legislation he put on the books: eight-hour day; secret ballot; compulsory voting; suffrage for both men and women; old age pensions; and unemployment insurance.

Probably one reason for their democracy is that education is the biggest item in the governmental budget. Schooling has been compulsory—and free—since 1909. Books, paper and pencils are furnished and colleges have no tuition. Through experimental schools, technical schools and adult education campaigns by radio and motion pictures, the government is trying to wipe out rural illiteracy.

It was just the beginning of the school year (the autumn month of March) when I visited an attractive little rural school. The teacher showed me the garden and tiny orchard where 10-year-olds learn about seeds and what makes them grow. Rural teachers receive an entirely different course of training than those teaching in the city. Boys and girls in the country go to grade school only about four years, as compared to six in urban areas. This school even had a radio.

The salesmen for windmills and windchargers are in clover down Uruguay-way, for how the wind doth blow! Many of the little sod houses have their electric lights and radios powered

by windchargers; the government has also put many radios in the schools. The Extension Service of the Ministry of Agriculture claims it has the only radio station in the world devoted exclusively to agricultural topics. It puts on a special program for school children which has become so popular that many of the farm folks without radios come to the schools to listen and to learn.

The Agricultural Extension Service has a fleet of Model-T trucks (the best for South American roads) fitted up to demonstrate seed testing, milk production, utilization of electricity, farm mechanics, etc. "*Los hombres hacen las leyes pero las mujeres las costumbres*" literally translated means "men make the laws but the women the customs." And that's why one Model-T truck has also been equipped to teach farm women everything from balancing beefsteak meals to cutting out young Rudolfo's trousers. This rural educational work is the best that I saw in any Latin American country.



Young Generation. Uruguayans are much like us. Take a look at these boys—they're like the boys who live down the road, or in the next block. This nation has one of the best educational systems in Latin America.

Uruguay hasn't gone in for armies—in 1941 she only had an army of 8,000, one cruiser and three motor boats. Although she has a system of compulsory military instruction, it is more of a week-end affair. "We take our instruction on Saturdays and Sundays when it doesn't interfere with business," a friend told me.

Normally, Uruguay's best customers are the United Kingdom and Germany. But the war has cut off some of this European trade and tossed it into Uncle Sam's lap. We're now buying more from and selling more to Uruguay than all of the rest of the countries combined. Uruguay prospers on foreign trade; and to be sure that she gets more money into the country than she pays out, she values her pesos at half a dozen different prices. There's an official rate, a free rate, controlled market rate, compensation exchange rate, etc.. so you can't tell what your peso is worth unless you know whether you're buying or selling, what, and from whom. It's all most confusing, but it's making money for Uruguay.

These people have one of the highest standards of living in Latin America, but it is not exactly a Utopia, a young friend told me. He was a college graduate, working for \$22 a month. I learned about money and chaperones from him. Chaperones, he claims, are not only a nuisance—they are downright expensive.

He cited a personal example: "I want to take my girl to the show. I know I must take her mother along, too. Sometimes her two sisters go along because, after all, her Mamma can't leave the daughters home unchaperoned. Then maybe one of these other girls brings along her boy friend. That leaves me, who wanted to go with only one, paying the way for five. And with tickets costing 35 cents for a movie, that's too much for my salary of \$22 a month. So I take a short cut; we meet in secret at the movie house."

This country has always had closer ties with Europe than with the United States. The ancestors of these people came largely from Italy and Spain and her customs and languages are Latin in origin. Her trade has been with Europe. Communications have been better with those countries.

When Herbert Hoover made a good will trip here several years ago, the people whistled and stamped their feet—and that in Uruguay means just plain "boo!" However, the feeling towards the United States has been improving steadily for the past few years. They are a bit peeved about our attitude on beef, they have queer ideas as a result of our movies, but they like the *Norteamericanos*. Business and professional men and teachers in Montevideo have founded the society, "Alianza Cultural Uruguay—Estados Unidos de N. America," to promote better understanding between the two nations.

And that is Uruguay, the smallest, but most progressive nation in Latin America. If I were to meet you in Uruguay, I'd probably say "Buenos Dias" instead of "Good Morning"—these people look enough like us to be our brothers.

Uruguay At A Glance

- Size:* 72,153 square miles; smallest nation in South America; size of South Dakota.
- People:* 2,150,000; practically all white, mainly Spanish and Italian descent.
- Capital:* Montevideo; one-third of all Uruguayans live in Montevideo.
- Sells:* Wool, beef, hides, flaxseed.
- Buys:* Manufactured goods, sugar, coal, oil.
- Industry:* Main source of wealth is stockraising; practically all land is utilized; little manufacturing because lacks coal, oil and minerals.

Uruguay is one of the most progressive and democratic nations in Latin America.

IV.

Argentine Pride and Prejudice

“*UN MOMENTO!*” a news photographer called as I stepped from the plane at the Buenos Aires airport. He flashed a picture before I could close my mouth. A reporter moved in, pencil and pad in hand.

“What do you think of Argentine beef?” he asked.

As a farm boy I’d heard much about Argentina, that sassy cow country which made our cattle Congressmen see red. And here I was on the *pampa*, and on the spot, learning that instead of a chip on his shoulder, the average Argentine carries a whole hind quarter of beef—and just dare knock it!

The Why-Doesn’t-Uncle-Sam-Buy-Beef issue has upset this nation whose people live in the cities, whose wealth comes from the soil, whose bull-breeders top the social registers and whose progressive people are proudest in Latin America. But let us postpone the beef question until we get acquainted—after all, Argentines wear the clothes we wear, drive the cars we drive, argue politics, and are South American Yankees when it comes to pride and pugnacity.

Any Argentine will tell you that this is easily the richest and most powerful country in Latin America. He can and does prove it convincingly with an impressive array of facts: “Argentina has the highest standard of living . . . the most autos . . . largest number of purebred bulls . . . longest railroad mileage . . . biggest city . . . greatest export trade . . . richest land . . . best beef . . . most factories. . .” and so on until you’re at least convinced that the Argentine has faith in his nation’s great destiny. With emphasis, he adds, “We are the whitest nation in the Americas!”

Argentina is a white man's country in both population and climate. Practically all of its 13 million people are of European descent, with Italians and Spaniards predominating. Most of the country has working man's weather the year around; it never gets as hot as it does in the hayfields of the Middle West, seldom becomes cold enough to snow.

This is the second biggest nation in Latin America, and a long one—2,300 miles from the Gran Chaco of the north to the wind-swept plains of Patagonia. Its cities are modern. Its varied climate and geography sprouts the same crops we have, and others, too. Northern territories stretch into tropical jungles where they grow sugar cane, cotton and quebracho. The West is as arid as Arizona. Patagonia, reaching south to the Straits of Magellan, is so inhospitably bleak that eight acres will support only one sheep. Argentina even has a dust bowl.

But the heart of Argentina is the *pampa*, that vast prairie fanning out from the city of Buenos Aires, flat as a football field and fertile as your garden. From the *pampa* comes a fifth of the world's *export* supply of wheat and flour; a third of the hides and skins; a half of the beef; three-fourths of the corn; and four-fifths of the flaxseed which enter world trade.

Despite these overwhelming agricultural statistics, three-fourths of the people live in cities. Buenos Aires is more than the biggest metropolis below the equator; it is home for one of every four Argentines. Under its busy streets is the finest subway system in the Americas. In one of its modern post offices I had my voice recorded and mailed as a talking letter to a friend back home, all for 35 cents. The big department stores have Parisian styles and escalators. Broad boulevards and sparkling apartment buildings shame sooty Chicago. As a group, people on the streets are more smartly dressed than any in the world. Traffic crashes along at a murderous rate, typifying the general hustle-bustle of the nation's hub.

Foreign trade—the biggest of any Latin American nation—is the magic wand which puts an urban veneer on this country, transforming quebracho into autos, beef into a subway, wheat into neckties, flaxseed into refrigerators and mutton into costume jewelry. Argentina annually goes to the world market to swap or sell almost half a billion dollars' worth of produce; 95

per cent of that produce comes from the soil. So to see the worth of the country, again we must train our sights beyond the city limits, to the pastures and grain fields of the fertile *pampa*.

Several years ago I visited the legendary site of the Garden of Eden in Iraq, and even ate some manna. But Eden has gone to seed and sand. Today my choice for the title "Eden of the Americas," is the *pampa* of Argentina. Any crack Master Farmer would feel at home there, once he got used to the idea of farming 20,000 acres instead of 200. Our farms would make just a nice front yard for these estancias. The census shows 2,072 *estancieros* own an average of 65,000 acres each—that's one-fifth of Argentina. Since the Argentine "average" of 5,000 acres still sounds pretty big, let's see how they got that way.

Until as late as 1850, Argentina was one huge range for millions of wild cattle and sheep without much purpose in life. They furnished meat for Indians and were hunted down by the white colonists for their hides, as our pioneers hunted buffalo. One account in the 18th century said "everyone is allowed to take as many cattle as he wishes, providing he does not exceed 10,000 or 12,000." Then things began to happen. Refrigeration was invented. Industrial Europe wanted fresh meat and grains. United States farmers had to give more attention to feeding the folks at home. Land was cheap in Argentina, and the wise boys cabbaged on to huge parcels of it at give-away prices. That was only 50 years ago.

When meat and grain started flowing to Europe around the turn of the century, these Argentines began to cash in. Many of the big landowners who started life as penniless immigrants are still living in Buenos Aires. Their sons are running the big tracts of land, dominating the government and asking, "Why won't the United States buy our beef?"

On the *pampa*, you're either a *chacarero* or a *ganadero*—a grain farmer or a livestock man—and you no more think of trying to be both than a veterinarian would try to prescribe for both horses and humans. So, by jiminy, (as my Dad would say), I'm not going to mix up beef production with the rest of



Corn to Burn. Three-fourths of all corn entering into world trade is Argentine corn. But in 1941 this country could not sell her corn, tried to burn it in locomotives and industrial plants instead. Corn in this picture is about 40% damaged by weevil.

Argentina. Beef is a story in itself and will be told a few pages later. Now to the overflowing Argentine granary . . .

Corn is Argentina's biggest crop—but I made a bad blunder when I asked Luis about the price. It was like asking a fellow if his wife was feeling better just after he had come home from her funeral. Because in 1941 Argentine farmers were burning their corn, the weevils were eating gobs of it and the government was trying to get rid of some for four cents a bushel. Four-fifths of the corn crop normally goes to Europe. But war has closed those markets and damned up a third of a billion bushels on Argentine farms.

Luis took me out to his *troje* (corn crib made out of cane stalks and supported by a few strands of wire). He pulled out several ears; the kernels were bored through and through with weevil. "In another few months, we won't have any corn surplus to worry about," he lamented. "The weevil and weather

will have it all. My money, my work, my time goes up in smoke."¹

He spoke the literal truth. "MAIZE AS FUEL" was the headline I read in Buenos Aires in the spring of 1941. The government was attempting to whittle down the corn surplus by urging locomotive and industrial firemen to toss two scoops of corn under the boilers for every three shovelful of coal, as they did in the first World War. Argentina must import all of her coal, but she has corn to burn. "Maize should be mixed with coal because maize alone will get too hot and burn out the grates," the newspaper warned. The government was also trying to stimulate domestic consumption by advocating it for poultry and hog feed—first time the Argentine hog ever got a break.

Farmers plant their rows of corn so thick that it is said jack rabbits have to go out to the end of the field to get from one middle to another.² In the Argentine corn belt where land sells for \$60 an acre, I saw fields that have been in corn continuously for two decades still yielding 50 bushels to the acre without an ounce of fertilizer. "Hybrid" is almost a foreign word to them. Their corn is a hard flint variety, dandy for export and chickens and more resistant to weevils, but a bit hard for livestock to crunch. (Few of their livestock ever get the chance to set teeth into corn. For no matter how cheap corn is, alfalfa is cheaper for cattle. Few hogs are raised and horses subsist mostly on roadside grass.)

Heroes of our corn husking contests would certainly go to town in Argentina. Luis told me proudly about the man who once shucked 100 bushels of corn from daylight to dark. In 1941 I saw Floyd Wise win the Illinois Corn Husking Contest by husking 50.9 bushels of corn in 80 minutes, a world record. But when I tried to tell of such deeds they laughed. They were certain I got lost translating my figures from acres to *hec-*

¹ Farmers were saved by a government corn loan of about 20 cents a bushel, so it was mainly government loss. But by the time Luis paid 7 cents a bushel for husking, 2½ cents for a sack, 2½ cents to haul corn to railroad station, and 6 cents more to get it to Buenos Aires, he probably wondered why he planted corn in the first place.

² Corn rows are only 27 inches apart, compared with 42 inches in the U. S. corn belt. Argentine yields compare favorably with our own. The 1941 crop was 417 million bushels from 15 million acres.

tareas and from bushels to *kilogramos*. What holds the Argentine husker back is the bag he drags along behind—to put the corn in.

“As yet a mechanical corn picker to wade through this thick corn has not been invented,” an American farm machinery executive commented. So when it’s husking time in Argentina, a contractor sends men, women and children to the fields. They go down the rows like cotton pickers, stripping the ears of shucks and silks and dropping them in the big sacks tied to their waists. As long as the war continues, Luis and the other



War Surplus. With no ships to move the grain, Argentine corn and wheat piled up at home. In 1941, corn was as low as three or four cents a bushel. Some cattlemen were even feeding it to cattle, an almost unheard of occurrence.

corn farmers in Argentina will view each corn harvest with alarm—wondering if they can afford to pay seven cents a bushel to have it husked.

Chacarero also means a wheat farmer. Argentina produces four-fifths of Latin America's wheat; normally, three-fifths of it goes into export channels. But war has piled millions of bushels on railroad station platforms with no destination, while at this writing, 200 Greeks are dying from hunger every day on the streets of Nazi-occupied Athens. A government loan has also kept the Argentine wheat farmer on his feet, but a question frequently asked is "Who's to keep the government going, if this continues?"

We haven't reached the bottom of this *pampa* horn-of-plenty yet. Argentina produces one-half of the world's flaxseed, normally sending 90 per cent of it into foreign trade channels. *In some years flaxseed puts more money into Argentine pockets than does beef*—1937 exports totaled \$84,000,000. It is high on the list of Uncle Sam's purchases since we produce only half of our needs. Flaxseed is the source of linseed oil; very little flax is raised in Argentina for its linen fiber.

Aside from the effects of war, *chacateros* as a group do not fare as well as you might expect in a second Eden, mainly because they are hamstrung by large landlords.³ Efcio is a typical tenant who came from Italy. He and 47 others rent a 10,000 acre estancia. He lives in a mud shack covered with the kind of tin we use for hog houses at home; floors are of dirt and there are no windows. The Argentine renter must always build his own home and outbuildings. Since he never knows when the landlord will tell him to move, he very seldom puts up anything except four walls and a roof. "When we move we take the center beam and all the rest of the house we can carry," Efcio explained.

Landlords always write the contracts: Efcio can have but five per cent of his land in pasture, and he is limited to one cow, 50 chickens and two pigs. Landowners do not want any of their grain fed to livestock (weevils have been eating it instead). Argentina has ten times as many cattle and twice as

³ Tenant farmers produce three-fourths of the corn, wheat and flaxseed, renting 200-acre chunks of 10,000 acre estates.



Tenants Have Tough Time. Big landowners—5,000 acres up—dominate Argentina. Renter families like this one, by the terms of their contracts, must provide their own homes. That's why most of them live in mud-walled shacks with floors of dirt.

many horses as hogs. Although it has been difficult for a pig to make a good hog of himself in this preferred beef country, some farmers have succumbed to government urging and are now feeding corn to hogs.

Best off among grain farmers is the one who owns his land. He usually has a nice home with electric lights and a radio, and his wife has a flower garden of dahlias and pansies. He diversifies his crops, has a few livestock and is usually a member of the local cooperative. Attempts to encourage more of these small farmers by breaking up large landholdings have met with little success. Grain farmers use imported farm machinery costing twice as much as the Illinois farmer pays. That's why power farming is coming along slowly; figure out for yourself how much five-cent corn it would take to buy a \$2,000 tractor.

"Lack of education in the rural areas, lack of diversified farming and the system of large landholding" were listed as agriculture's biggest problems by the editor of *La Chacra*, a farm magazine. He added, "The biggest problem of good relations between our two countries is beef—we do not see how your government can persist in its unfriendly attitude."

In a land of beef eaters, the milk drinkers haven't much chance. But Buenos Aires is one of the few places in Latin America where you can drink milk without first boiling it. I visited one estancia where they milked 9,000 Holsteins. The cows were farmed out in lots of about 40 to a family, depending upon the number of the family members who could milk. They were paid on a butterfat basis for all milk delivered, to prevent watering. In fact, a few housewives in Buenos Aires still buy their milk from a man who drives his cows around to the house, and milks them before observing eyes—these folks want to be sure they're not buying water.

"In Patagonia the wind blows so hard," declared an *estanciero*, "that when our plane lights, a dozen people must grab hold of it immediately or it will be blown away." This long southern tongue of Argentina extending to Tierra del Fuego is exclusively sheep country. Landholdings average 100,000 acres but range land is so poor that in many places it takes eight acres to keep a sheep alive. Wool from the backs of 43 million sheep normally accounts for a tenth of this nation's export business. But war and soldiers' uniforms have boomed the price of wool; Uncle Sam is buying Argentine wool as fast as sheep can sprout it, and as fast as ships can carry it.

The timber and quebracho lands, the sugar cane and cotton fields of the north are tropical; and here the people live as precariously as in our own "Grapes of Wrath" areas. Sugar production, for instance, is limited by quotas; yet it is so expensive that workers in sugar cane fields and factories cannot afford to buy all they need for their own tables.

Cotton production is increasing in this region. Argentina exports half of it, turns around and imports \$30,000,000 worth of cotton textiles. She has 120 million acres of timber, but in 1937 imported \$16,000,000 worth of lumber. These



They Have Milk Cows, Too. Beef is first in Argentina, but this Holstein holds a world record. Buenos Aires is one of the few cities in Latin America where you feel safe drinking milk without first boiling it.

facts, together with the disastrous grain situation, emphasize Argentina's dependence on foreign trade.⁴ When she sells her meat and grain, Argentina flies high. And when war plays havoc with her trade, it cripples the entire country.

What Argentina needs, many have preached, is more industry and fewer farms. Others are quick to retort, "That would be fine—if only we had the wherewithal for industry. Argentina has neither power nor mineral resources." They point out Argentina has no iron and very few minerals. She must import all of her coal and half of her oil. Her fuel bill alone runs \$50,000,000 a year. (And I can testify that none of that was used for heating houses. Even though it gets down to freezing occasionally, few people own a heating stove or a furnace.)

This nation has factories, all right—she lays claim to the industrial title of Latin America.⁵ A large part of that industry is devoted to processing farm products; wheat is ground into

⁴ She is the biggest exporter in the world of beef, corn and linseed; second biggest of wheat, wool and mutton. Her trade topped the billion mark in 1928, was only 416 millions a decade later.

⁵ Census for 1938 shows 642,000 persons employed in 49,311 industrial establishments. However, three-fourths of these "factories" employed less than six men each.



Sheep Are Big Business. This grand champion ram is typical of some of the fine purebred sheep of Argentina. Wool has always been one of the leading exports.

flour, beef is cut into steaks, hides are made into shoes, and cotton is spun into cloth. Of course, she has railroads, great packing houses and big auto assembly plants. But two-thirds of the railroads are British, while the names of Swift, Anglo, Armour and Wilson are lettered on the packing houses—General Motors and Ford on the assembly plants. In short, much of Argentine industry is controlled by foreign capital.

Argentina was first settled 400 years ago, but as a republic she is still in short pants. For three centuries these Argentine provinces were under the thumb of Mother Spain. To keep them subservient, Spain insisted that all Argentine produce had to be loaded on backs of donkeys, carried over the tremendous Andes mountains to Peru, sent from there by boat to Panama, across the Isthmus by donkey and thence by boat to Spain. All of this, instead of loading it on a boat at Buenos Aires and shipping it directly to Spain. This silly and severe

policy rankled the *criollos*, or American-born Spaniards, who had to play second fiddle to the strong-arm officials sent over from the mother country.

General José de San Martín was the George Washington who took the lead in protesting this Spanish misrule. With a ragged army of a few thousand he liberated Uruguay, Paraguay, Argentina, Chile and Peru from the Spanish yoke, earning for himself a hero's title.

But independence from Spain (many did not want it) did not bring peace and prosperity in Argentina any more than it had in Uruguay. *Caudillos*, local military big shots with their own private armies, took over the control of the provinces. Mother Spain had sown well the seeds of graft, desire for rule and crooked politics, characteristics which are not unknown in Argentina today. Only after 1900 when meat and grain brought wealth to the nation did Argentina get started on the trail to prominence and power that she occupies today.

Voting is not only a privilege in Argentina—it is a duty, compulsory by law. You can be fined if you do not vote. (Of course, that doesn't apply to women, whose place is still in the home.) Argentina has two parties—the Conservatives, who consist mainly of the landed aristocracy; and the Radicals, who are not radical at all, just liberal.

The Radical party, whose backbone is a growing middle class, usually has the most votes; but that doesn't mean it wins the elections. A newspaper man told me a story of the Argentine secret ballot: A *gaucho* rode up to the polling place in the country, tied his horse to the rack and went in to vote. An election official took a blank ballot, marked it, folded and placed it in the ballot box—without even showing it to the *gaucho*. "That's your vote," he was told.

"But I did not see it," the *gaucho* protested.

"Of course not!" was the answer. "This is the secret ballot."

It has been said the Radicals have the ballots, and the Conservatives have the boxes. (Do you suppose they know that in our machine-controlled cities we tell voters how to vote; that in the South we don't let some citizens vote at all; that in Clark



School Children in Uniform. And do they know how to ride! At this country school all the children had on white uniforms. When I asked why, the teacher replied: "We believe it's more democratic. It means rich and poor are all dressed alike."

county, Illinois, someone stole the ballot box the last time I voted!)

"Argentina is a democracy because we have an educated people," a teacher told me.⁶ Out in the country I had seen an attractive building with a flag flying, a windcharger whizzing and a long row of horses tied to a hitch rack in front. "That's a school," my driver informed me, so we stopped to visit. There were only four grades because that's all the schooling they get in the rural areas.

All children were dressed in spotless white smocks, reminding me of the days when we used to be shined up for Children's Day exercises at the country church. "School children wear these white uniforms because we think they are more democratic. It means rich and poor are all dressed alike," explained the teacher. I had only one question—how in the heck can a guy play football' in a white smock?

⁶ Illiteracy has been hammered down to only 12%, according to government reports, one of the lowest rates in Latin America.

⁷ Argentines play soccer football. Because they are such enthusiastic fans, one big stadium in Buenos Aires has a wide water-filled moat around the playing field. They told me its purpose: "Ten feet of water between the spectators and players prevents excited rooters from mobbing the referee."

Children learn to ride almost as soon as they learn to walk. You should have seen these boys and girls when I asked the teacher if I might get a picture of them with their horses. It was better than a rodeo. They all made wild dashes for the ponies and threw on their sheepskin saddles. Up they swarmed; one, two, three to a horse. And then they all galloped by the schoolhouse yelling like a troop of Indians as I snapped the picture. (Lucky a school board member didn't happen along to see this riding exhibition during arithmetic period.)

After we had talked school, the teacher made a statement and asked a question: "I think," she declared, "Franklin D. Roosevelt is the greatest man in the world." And she added, "We want to be friendly with your country, but why doesn't the United States buy our beef?"

Buenos Aires has some of the best newspapers in the world. Such journals as *La Prensa* and *La Nacion* have helped lay the real foundations of democracy. "Argentines are proud! We want to rule ourselves, not be mothered by the States," an editor of *La Prensa* told me. "I have spent some time in the



Bogged Down. In all the vast area of the pampa, there isn't a rock or gravel pit. That is one thing which has held back road building. After a rain, an auto in the country is not much good, as you can see.

United States and like your country very much. But we should have a frank understanding, and that's why I speak now. We think it is a dirty political trick—the sanitary ruling that keeps Argentine beef out of your country."

When you travel in Argentina you go by train, along with all of the meat and grain. The 26,700 mile railroad system is the most extensive in Latin America, and so essential that you must put the name of the railroad line as part of the address when you send a letter outside of Buenos Aires. But British-owned railroads, fearing competition, have held back highway construction, aided by the fact that in all of the *pampa* there is not a rock nor pebble that has not been carried there by man. There are no handy gravel pits or stone quarries to fill in mud puddles. We got stuck in one—and it hadn't rained for nearly a week. Most of the roads are dirt, gooey mud when it rains and for some time after. Best way to get around is by horseback or two-wheeled sulky.

Those persons who are always talking about the good old horse and buggy days would feel at home among the eight million horses of Argentina. An *estanciero* has his polo ponies, children have their riding horses, and a farmer with 160 acres of crop land has about 40 work horses.⁸ A *chacarero* opened his garage (made mostly of cornstalks) and showed me his sulky as proudly as if it had 12 cylinders. It cost \$85; when I whistled my surprise at the high price, he reminded me a Ford costs \$1,500. And when it rains, a car is almost useless outside city paved streets.

They have more than a quarter of a million autos in Argentina, three-fifths of the total in South America; and most of them are found on the streets of Buenos Aires. They churn along at blitz speed, drivers making up their own traffic rules as they go.

"We tried out the red and green traffic light control system," a friend told me, "but it wouldn't work. No one would stop for the red light." Argentines are not a people to be governed by mere mechanical contraptions.

⁸ He hitches eight horses to a plow where the U. S. farmer would use four, changes them for eight fresh horses at noon. Only food many of these horses get is what they can nibble on the roadsides; luckily, wide Argentine roads are usually more pasture than road.



Land of Horses. Horse-and-buggy-days are still with Argentina. This is one of the few Latin American nations where horses instead of oxen furnish the main farm power. A farmer on 160 acres will have about 40 work horses, but they do only half as much as ours.

Latin America's most modern city has sprung up on the mud banks of the "*Rio de la Plata*." Buenos Aires has race tracks, opera houses, night clubs, as well as the usual quota of parks and statues. And if Yankees become homesick in the sophisticated atmosphere they can always drop into a milk bar for an ice cream soda; or drive by the president's residence, *Casa Rosada*, or Pink House.

One day in Buenos Aires I was sitting on the corner of a desk in a business office talking with some gentlemen who had heard my Paraguay broadcast. "And how do you like Paraguay?" one asked.

"So well that I warned the people back home that if I didn't show up at home this summer, they would find me down in Paraguay growing oranges," I answered—and for once I said the right thing.

Up jumped the gentleman; he stuck out his hand, all but embraced me and exclaimed, "Bueno! Bueno!" which means pretty darned good. One of his associates said quite casually, "Dr. Guggiari, you know, was president of Paraguay." Dr. Guggiari introduced a liberal movement in Paraguay during his 1928-32 term. "I'm anti-fascisti! Anti-Nazisti! And I think

President Roosevelt is the greatest man in the world!" he declared with Latin fire in his voice.

Buenos Aires has a prosperous air about it, although salary figures do not bear this out: A clerk in a store may get \$20 a month; a stenographer, \$30; common labor, perhaps 15 cents an hour; textile workers, less. The 140,000 railroad workers are paid an average of \$52 a month. Many factory families have incomes of no more than \$35 a month. "But our money goes farther here," a friend carefully pointed out. "We can buy the best steak in the world at the butcher shop for nine cents a pound."

Argentines were constantly turning the tables and asking me questions. Aside from beef, our movies provoked the most queries. One young chap who knew I was from Chicago, saw the hand which I got tangled up in the mowing machine, lowered his voice, pointed to my missing finger, and stage-whispered, "Gangsters?" I also had to assure them we don't go everywhere by "yellow cab;" that we don't all live in Hollywood homes with butlers; and that many people in the United States have never been divorced even once.

Our movies have had their good effects, too, influencing many youngsters to study English. Coming back from Uruguay to Buenos Aires, I had trouble with the custom's examiners. They argue with visitors who bring one camera into the country. When I landed with three cameras and a typewriter, the examiner almost hit the ceiling, suspiciously certain I was smuggling them in to sell.

"Can I help you?" a young fellow asked in perfect English.⁹ He certainly could and did help me talk my way through. When he learned I was a journalist from Chicago, he asked me if I knew a John Strohm whom he had heard broadcasting from Asunción, Paraguay. Nestor told me he used to sit blindfolded in a movie to accustom his ears to the sound of English.

Movies are even helping to break down the chaperone system, so popular all over Latin America. When these youngsters saw American couples picnicking (and necking), playing tennis together and going to the movies unaccompanied by mothers

⁹ In Buenos Aires high schools, students take 4 years of French; 3 years of English, 2 years of Italian.



Town Plaza. This typical small-town plaza shows Hero San Martín, the Catholic Church, and the City Hall. Every evening the boys and girls walk around the plaza. Only the girls walk in one direction, and the boys in the other—they can't walk together in Argentina.

or brothers, they complained, "If Americans can do these things, why can't we?" And today some of them do—but not many.

Spaniards and Italians have transplanted their Church, their government and their customs to Argentina—they did not come to the New World to escape religious or political persecution, as did our ancestors. Catholicism is the state religion and by law the president must be Catholic. While the Church is still strong, "only the old dames go to church," a young Buenos Aires lad told me. The Church officiates at baptism, marriage and burial, but few men go to church; both schools and government have broken away from its supervision to a great extent.

A young government official was talking with me about "American girls." "For a pal and fun, I'll take your American girls," he declared enthusiastically. "They're wonderful. But to marry, give me an Argentine señorita—she knows her place is in the home." Women cannot vote, do not go to funerals, sel-

dom dare go out alone. An unmarried woman can be ostracized for walking down the street with a man.

Practically every town has a plaza in the center of town instead of the courthouse square. On one side is the Catholic church, on the other is the City Hall; a statue of San Martín on a horse graces the favored position in the midst of flowers and shrubbery. There are more people walking around this plaza about eight o'clock every evening than used to throng Marshall, Illinois, on band concert night. The girls walk arm-in-arm around the plaza, and the boys do the same—in opposite directions. They smile at each other, nudge their partners, speak and giggle a little but the boys can never suggest a soda—not in Argentina.

Nevertheless, the Argentine way of living is not too different from our own. I saw kids shooting marbles, little girls making mud pies and others sipping sodas through real straws. Birthday parties differ from ours only in that they serve wine instead of lemonade, and every brother brings his sister whether he wants to or not. Once when I was out riding with young people in Buenos Aires, they sang "Long, Long Trail," "Tipperary" and "Oh, Johnnie." They sang their national anthem for me, too; then asked me to sing the Star Spangled Banner—they wanted to learn it.

Argentines, generally speaking, are very much pro-British¹⁰ and pro-democratic.

Although the majority of the people are all for Uncle Sam, Argentina has been riding the fence in an effort to stand in good with both sides. "After all," one official pointed out, "Germany bought more of our goods in 1938 than did the United States. They are not afraid of our beef." There it goes again—beef, the beginning and end of every conversation in Argentina.

This, then is the story of *carne de vaca Argentine*, more unpopularly known on the U. S. Senate floor as "Argentine beef."

"Can I give you a job as a *gaucho*?" one *estanciero* asked me. "You'll need it if you print what I have on my mind!" But

¹⁰ Britain has a two billion dollar investment in Argentina, is No. 1 customer.



Carne de Vaca Argentine. There's a more unpopular name for it on the U. S. Senate floor—"Argentine beef". These cattle grow up on alfalfa, and are fattened on rye and oats pastures. Prime beef sells for 3 or 4 cents a pound, and sometimes breeders pay \$30,000 for a bull.

I said, "No, thanks," and now with bridges burned, let's get on with the story.

Argentine beef comes from peaceful, grass-chewing animals called *vacunos*, more familiarly recognized as cattle. The man who owns these cattle is called an *estanciero*. He is white, has a home with a bathroom, a wife and babies, and he drives an American automobile. He is the aristocrat of Argentina and controls a good share of the government.

The *Sociedad Rural*, his farm organization, is more politically potent than Chicago's Kelly-Nash machine. Since bull-breeding has more social standing than grain growing, many *estancieros* stick to their cattle even though they may lose money. The *estanciero* and his cattle live on an *estancia*, the name for five (or 50) thousand acres, all in one chunk and worth \$20 per.

Argentina is one place where a man's home might really be his castle. On one visit, I drove down a long eucalyptus-lined drive to a chateau, surrounded by formal gardens and lily pools with gliding white swans—it takes 30 men just to keep the grass cut, the trees trimmed and the windows washed on this *estancia*. Inside the great stone mansion, rich oil paintings of bulls hung on the wall beside Aunt Bessie.

Four-fifths of the cattle on these *estancias* are Shorthorns because this breed "eats more and grows up quicker." The fact that nearly half of this country is in pasture is a give-away clue as to what cattle eat to put on meat. Alfalfa is rated No. 1

victual, and cattle grow fat on 2½ acres. It is by no means an all-alfalfa diet.¹¹ Many baby beeves get their start on native grasses before they are moved to fattening pastures where alfalfa is hip high.

To us who've fed our cattle as carefully as home economists say husbands should be fed, the above rations may seem a bit on the ordinary side. For from the day they're taken off mother's milk, steers munch pastures for a living. No crushed corn, oats or soybeans. No cottonseed cake and fancy store feeds. No fancy barns or even roofs because it seldom gets cold enough to snow; they just munch outside 12 months of the year without a moo.

The cowboy of the *pampa* used to be the *gaucho*. He rode the range with a knife in the belt of his baggy pants about the time our Western cowboys were carrying two guns and trying to beat the other fellow to the draw. What a character! His baggy pants were held in place by a wide silver belt, his open shirt showed a bronzed belly, and the colorful scarf about his neck trailed in the wind. He hunted, rode, sang and wooed like a Robin Hood.

In the early days, this cowboy with Indian blood used the *boleadora* instead of the lasso. It has three thongs, knotted together at the end, with small rocks tied to the loose ends. The *gaucho* would twirl this weapon about his head in the manner of David with a sling, and let it fly to tangle the legs of horses, cattle or even the wild ostrich. But the *gaucho* is making his last stand in Hollywood. His place has been taken by the peon, a fellow who gets fifty-cents-a-day-and-keep for his work.

"What we have is a beef factory—we turn grass into beef," is the way one *estanciero* spoke of the cattle business. "We can produce beef more efficiently than any country in the world. I send steers to market at 22 to 24 months, weighing 1,000 pounds." He pointed out that land is worth only \$16 to \$22 an acre in the fattening areas. Taxes are only 10 to 20 cents an

¹¹ Frequently steers are turned into fields of green corn and sorghum. Oats and rye pastures are best for that slick finish, but alfalfa is cheapest. Alfalfa formerly lasted 10 to 15 years without replanting on the rich *pampa*; now it must be reseeded every five to seven years, a source of worry for *estancieros* since it indicates the sub-soil moisture is diminishing.



Gauchos Are Gone. This is one of the few remaining gauchos—today, they are as scarce as two-gun cowboys in our own Wild West. The wide silver belt and the baggy pants are characteristic. The gaucho is no more. Now it is the peon who works for 50 cents a day and keep.

acre. Help is cheap; a \$14-a-month peon can ride herd on a couple of thousand head of cattle.

The major-domo of another estancia drove me out into a huge pasture to show me 500 head of steers. We drove and drove, scaring up jackrabbits and even a skunk, but no steers—first time I knew you could misplace that many cattle so easily. When the steers are fat enough so water will stand on their backs, the *estanciero* calls up the *frigorífico*, or meat packer. Chances are 50-50 it will be one of the firms that have their



"It's Like Sitting in a Rocking Chair." The famous Argentine artist, F. Molina Campos, who is famous for his portrayal of the gaucho, has been commissioned by the Minneapolis-Moline Power and Implement Company to illustrate their 1944 calendar. Most Latin American travelers bring back copies of old calendars illustrated by this famous artist.

main headquarters at the Chicago stockyards. Packers all have their own string of clients, seldom go in for competitive bidding, and never poach on another packer's preserves.

"But can't you shop around for better prices from other buyers?" I asked.

"No, señor," was the regretful answer. "Because when cattle are plentiful the packers might refuse to take our cattle." The government thought the packers were in league against the feeders, so it set cattle prices in 1941. Top price for the best Argentine beef, translated into Uncle Sam's money, was 3.2 cents a pound on the hoof; for the poorer beef as low as 2.3 cents. Yes, ladies, that means you could go to a Buenos Aires butcher shop and buy a steak for 8 cents a pound, tenderloin for 13 cents and soup bones for 1½ cents.

Great Britain and her "roast bif" eating people have been the best customers for Argentine beef since refrigeration made fresh meat shipments practical. Top beef is ordinarily shipped in a chilled state, just above freezing. But it requires special handling and quick delivery, and ship captains never know when they will have to play hide and seek with an Axis submarine. So during World War II England has taken frozen beef, much of it boned out to save shipping space.

One morning, long before daylight, I sat down to breakfast at the home of an *estanciero*. We were leaving at 5 a. m. to see some of his cattle and I tried to beg off with a cup of coffee. But it was not to be. "Try this steak," he invited, as a servant set down two sizzling slabs of tenderloin before me. "How do you like it? How does that compare with your beef in Illinois? What would that steak cost in New York?" he asked as I ate.

It was much too early to have enjoyed the best steak in the world. But, of course, this *estanciero* is convinced he has the best. And it is good. It is my considered opinion—after eating steak twice and sometimes three times a day all over Argentina—that you can get good beefsteak and you can get some poor; but the poor is still pretty good. (Notwithstanding the fact that outside the big cities you always eat beef from cattle killed the same day or the day before: they have little refrigeration.) At first, when I had to wait until 10 p.m. to get at the steak, I was convinced it was a plot to make me hungry enough to brag on the meat; then I learned it is merely the regular dining hour.

But all is not sunshine on the *pampa*. An unseen germ is on the loose which gives Argentines apoplexy, poisons U. S.-Argentine relations, and, incidentally, makes the hoofs and mouths of cattle sore. This germ causes *aftosa*, more frighteningly known as hoof-and-mouth disease. And now we're getting warmer in our search as to why the United States does not buy Argentine beef.

First, the disease: Hoof-and-mouth disease is so widespread that eradication seems hopeless; it is something the *estanciero* always fears and always expects, but it is an astonishing fact that seldom does a cow keel over and die from it. Sometimes the disease is mild, sometimes serious. Sometimes it takes dif-

ferent forms; maybe all of the cattle will be afflicted and perhaps only a few. An *estanciero* may round up his prime steers ready for shipping, and go out the next morning to find that hoof and mouth disease has struck his herd.

The cattle's feet become so sore they lie down, and blistered tongues and peeling noses do not make grass very appetizing. Consequently, they fast for two or three weeks, and sometimes lose as much as 200 pounds before they can get back on their feet and feed. There is no cure for the bug or virus. Cattle can be immunized for a period of 10 to 14 days with a blood transfusion from an animal just recovered from the disease. But it is too costly for anything except show stock, and perhaps a *toro*—bull, to you.

The government has many regulations: Vets must inspect the cattle before they are shipped; sick herds are quarantined; and so on. But the disease is so general that regulations are frequently evaded. (Just as sometimes little Henry goes back to school before he is over the mumps.) However, the animals are inspected carefully before they get into the packing house. "We have the most thorough inspection routine of packing plants anywhere in the world," one packing house manager, a U. S. citizen, assured me.

While the average *estanciero* is no doubt proud of his wife, auto and 20,000 acres, he is prouder of his blooded livestock. He pays fancy prices for imported sires, and competition between *estancieros* is keen. Just to give you an idea of what I mean, let me tell you about a visit to an estancia where they were preparing animals for the Palermo show, the International Livestock Exposition of the *pampa*, and top social event in the country.

Talk about pampered livestock! Forty-five Shorthorns and Herefords had been selected when they were only three months of age. And every day for more than a year they were scrubbed with soap and water by regular attendants who also put them through rigid schedules of eating and exercises. But here's the pay-off: A herd of 100 milk cows was kept solely to furnish milk for these 45 show animals. I saw peons drive these cows into stalls; they tied a calf to each cow's front leg (so she

would give down her milk); and then the prize two-year-old bulls would fall to, sucking as many as three to five cows.

"Milk puts on that extra finish," the major-domo explained.

Top prize at their livestock show is the purple ribbon for the grand champion Shorthorn bull. One year this prize bull sold at auction for more than \$30,000, and several years it brought more than \$20,000. Not only do oil paintings of these bulls hang in the parlors—many *estancias* have bull graveyards. An Iowa visitor, noting all the care which Argentines lavish on their blue blooded stock, made the comment: "If I had a son in Argentina, I'd want him to be a bull."

So you get some idea why the *estanciero* would be offended if someone were to say, "Señor, we'd like to import some of your beef, but frankly we think it's lousy!" Yet, the average Argentine is convinced that Uncle Sam is telling him just that. To keep hoof-and-mouth disease from our cattle herds—and we know the damage it can do¹²—our government has a sanitary embargo against importation of fresh meat from any country known to have this disease. This embargo prevents more than 20 nations of the world, including Argentina and Uruguay, from shipping fresh meat to the United States.

From the barrage of questions and opinions about Uncle Sam and beef, I've sifted these Argentine-man-on-the-street convictions:

"Politics, not fear of hoof-and-mouth disease, is responsible for the sanitary ruling barring our beef from U. S. markets."

"There is no danger in transmitting the disease in boned-out meat."

"Disease-free Patagonia is another country, geographically, but the United States still refuses to take meat from there!"

"It is inconceivable that there is none of this disease in the U. S."

"England, with its healthy people and fine herds of cat-

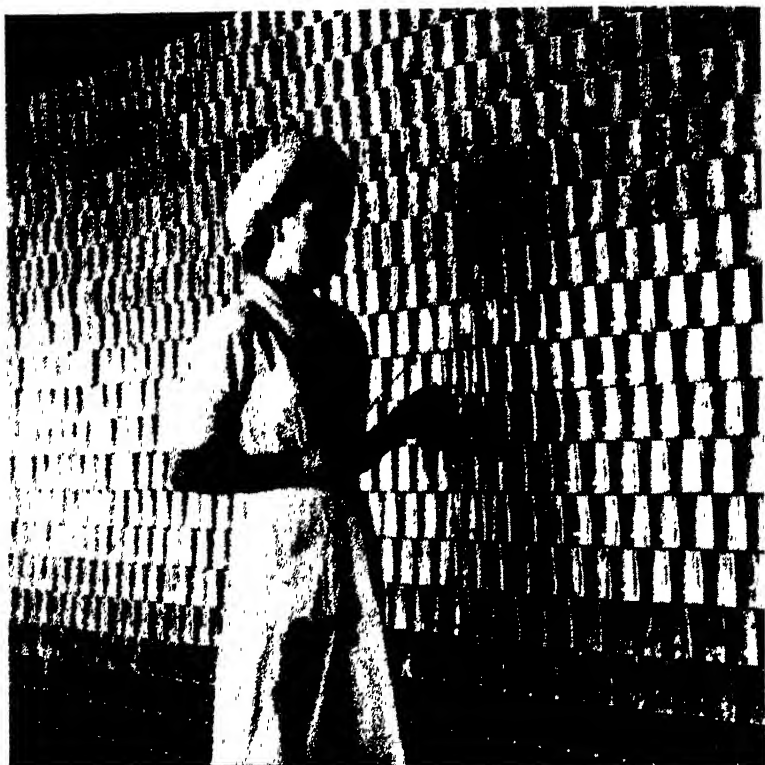
¹² Outbreaks of hoof-and-mouth disease in the United States occurred in 1914; 1924-25; 1929. Result was destruction of nearly half a million animals before it was eradicated.

tle, is the biggest importer of Argentine beef; why then should the U. S. hesitate to buy?"

"The average U. S. citizen is not as well-fed as he should be because beef is too expensive, and too scarce."

"United States wants to sell her goods to Argentina, but does not want to buy—not even canned beef."

Our businessmen in Argentina have added fuel to this fire. A cattle buyer for a big U. S. packing company in Buenos Aires growled, "It's a political subterfuge, this sanitary restriction. We buy bones, hides, wool and turkeys from infected areas, but we refuse to buy beef simply because we don't want it."



Fighting Words. Uncle Sam's ban on fresh Argentine beef—because of hoof-and-mouth disease—has aroused widespread resentment among all Argentines. And it makes them even madder when we refuse to buy their canned beef (no danger from hoof-and-mouth disease), which is much superior to our own. Beef causes more trouble in U. S.-Argentine relations than any other single thing.

All of these opinions got plenty of airing in 1941 when our Senate debated whether or not Uncle Sam should buy two million pounds of Argentine canned beef¹³ for the navy at 19 cents a pound, instead of paying 33 cents for a "Made in U.S.A." brand. Argentine newspapers gave as much space to the canned beef controversy as they did to the other war. It really has turned into an economic war.

"You talk about Good Neighbor policy. You say you are afraid to buy our fresh meat because of disease. What excuse have you for not buying our canned beef?" cited one official. And he turned to trade statistics: During 12 of the past 15 years Argentina bought more from the U. S. than it sold to us; and during several of those years her imports were double her exports to us.

"How do we know your tractors don't have hoof and mouth disease?" was the sly comment of a fellow train passenger.

"Personally, I think we should put a ban on American automobiles—how do we know they will not transmit sit-down strike fever to the *pampa*," chimed in another. Underneath their light comments is a feeling of great bitterness.

"No longer do we want to read of weak excuses put forward on behalf of American producers as reasons why Argentine meat cannot be imported," declared a spokesman for the Argentine Meat Producers after the Senate debate on canned beef. "We should make up our minds immediately to do without American manufactured goods." The Argentine government in 1941 was taking a hand, making it practically impossible to buy certain U. S. goods. I could not buy film for my camera, even though large supplies were in port—the firm could not get it out of customs until dollar exchange was granted. Argentines like and want to buy our goods even though they cost more, but the government has said, "We cannot buy your goods until we sell something to you."¹⁴

A trade agreement signed in October, 1941, between the United States and Argentina may solve some of these prob-

¹³ I went through Argentine packing houses, saw prime beef put into cans. Their canned beef on the average is much higher quality than U. S. canned beef.

¹⁴ We bought more from Argentina in 1941 than at any time in history; war has turned the tables almost completely—Argentina now cannot get U. S. goods because of priorities.

lems. We made some concessions on her flaxseed, wool and canned beef;¹³ and we secured concessions on autos, radios and other manufactured goods. President Roosevelt called this agreement—the twelfth we signed with Latin American countries—"A new link in the chain of friendship, peace and good neighborliness."

There is still a mighty weak link in that chain—the profound conviction among the rank and file of Argentines that *politics*, not fear of disease, keeps their meat out of the United States. One official told me: "There can never be genuine good feeling between our countries until this question is cleared up." He pointed out that our sanitary ruling has placed a stigma on their beef—a stigma, it was hinted, that allowed the English to hold down the price. "We would rather have a prohibitive tariff placed on our meat than a sanitary restriction," I was told time and again.

Now, as a farm boy whose folks feed cattle, may I put in my two cents' worth:

First: A mighty noise has been raised about Argentine beef. (Just as we raised a mighty noise over a \$4,600 salary for a Miss Chaney, a civilian defense dancing teacher, although our Congress passed a \$32,000,000,000 appropriation bill without a blink on the same day.) This beef question is something which gives proud Argentines a chance to holler, even though it isn't entirely beef they are squawking about—their pride has been hurt. As ties with Europe are cut, they feel stranded. War has crumbled their export trade. They are a bit envious of Uncle Sam; they want to be the leader of Latin America, but see Brazil booming—backed by United States. So they yell about our refusal to buy beef, just as in the United States "dancers" and "pensions for Congressmen" became our whipping post in 1942.

Second: Beef is important, yes. But beef ranks *fourth* in Argentine exports. In five respective years between 1929-38, exports of chilled and frozen beef only averaged 10.6 per cent of the total. Corn made up 21 per cent of the exports, twice that of beef. Wheat accounted for 18 per cent; linseed, 16 per

¹³ Duty on flaxseed was reduced from 65 to 50 cents a bushel; canned meats, 6 to 3 cents a pound; carpet wools duty free; tallow, 3.5 to 1.75 cents a pound; oleo oil, 4 to 2 cents.

cent. But do you ever hear anyone mention linseed? In 1937, we bought 34 million dollars' worth of Argentine linseed.

Third: Hoof-and-mouth disease has been discussed fluently by businessmen, politicians, newspaper editors and ranchers (of both countries). But does a veterinarian ever make the headlines? Hoof-and-mouth disease is a technical matter to be decided in the laboratory, not in political squabbles. U. S. Department of Agriculture scientists have assured us the disease can be transmitted if we import fresh meat. Farmers know, if that is true, it would be disastrous to our huge cattle industry.

Fourth: It isn't enough that we think we are right. Argentines are convinced we are playing politics, and as long as they sincerely believe that, they will also put us down as a bunch of hypocrites preaching the Good Neighbor sermon on Sundays and kicking them all through the week. Our government will never change this Argentine attitude with speeches in Congress or by sending down missionaries and movie actors. We must send a commission of qualified veterinarians to meet with a similar commission of Argentine veterinarians and settle this problem where it should be solved—in the laboratory.

That is the story of Argentine beef; it's almost the story of Argentina. I was taken into their homes and I ate their beefsteak; I was offered a *gaucho* job and even got a goodbye gift of a necktie. This proud country, most similar geographically to the United States, it not so different in other ways. One difference is beef. Solving that problem might well be the initial step in drawing our countries closer together, to the mutual benefit of both.

Argentina At A Glance

Size: 1,078,278 square miles; one-third the size of United States.

People: 13 million, practically all white, of Italian and Spanish descent.

Capital: Buenos Aires, biggest city below equator. One-fourth of all Argentines live in Greater Buenos Aires.

Sells: Corn, wheat, flaxseed, beef, wool, quebracho.

Buys: Cotton and woolen goods; machinery; coal, oil, iron and steel manufactures.

Industry: Argentina's wealth lies in her soil. Because she lacks fuel and minerals she will never be a large manufacturing nation.

Argentina is one of the most progressive and most powerful in Latin America. Dependent on foreign trade, war has crippled her internal economy. Her people are proud, resent Uncle Sam's leadership in the Americas. Beef is a sore point.

Hot Times In Chile

FOR a prairie dweller who had always thought of Brown county (Indiana) hills as mountain scenery, the Andes Mountains were pretty much of a shock. A 600-mile flight from Buenos Aires over table-smooth Argentina brought us smack up against this three-mile high wrinkle in the earth's surface.

The Andes rear up to form an almost impassable barrier which has kept, and still keeps Chile, Peru and Ecuador from hobnobbing with Brazil, Paraguay and Argentina. East and West are weeks apart in South America, and all because of the Andes. A few years ago a railroad was threaded through the Upsallata Pass to connect Argentina and Chile, but it is now out of service because of great landslides. A highway through the same pass is the sole land communication over a 2,000-mile common frontier—and it is snow-free only in summer.

You really need a magic carpet to bridge the mountains and jungles in Latin America. The airplane has been just that, drawing countries of this continent closer together and inspiring the name of "thunderbird" among the awe-stricken Indians below. By plane Argentina is only an hour from Chile—twenty minutes up, twenty minutes over the mountains, and twenty to land. That's a prosaic way of describing the most thrilling hurdle of my entire 18,000-mile circle flight, from Chicago through 18 republics and back to Chicago.

Before taking off from Mendoza on the Argentine side, we got a weather report; sometimes the wind whips snow from the nearby peaks into a maelstrom to oppose the flight even of a "thunderbird." "Come ahead, the weather's fine," radioed the operator who lives in a little hut high in the Pass and serves as "eyes" for these planes. Our 21-passenger bird swiftly climbed more than three miles high, then poised ready to fly over the Andes—rather to fly *through* them, because



Hurdling the Andes. With a "thunderbird" at your command, the Andes are easy. We flew through Upsallata Pass, and under the very nose of Mt. Aconcagua, highest point in the Americas, 23,081 feet above sea level.

they're a bit too high to fly over. The route follows Upsallata Pass,¹ a gorge-like winding passage through convulsive heaps of barren rock.

We flew at an altitude of 17,000 feet, yet through windows oiled to keep them from frosting we could see mountains on all sides; I had to look *up* to see the sky. Snow-covered Mt. Aconcagua, highest point in the Americas, towered another mile above us. It seemed almost close enough to touch as we hurtled by. At times it appeared we were boxed in, certain to wham at a three-mile-a-minute clip into the rocky flanks ahead. But this was just routine stuff to our plane crew, and we always made the turn in time.

¹ Highest point in Upsallata Pass is 12,800 feet. Mt. Aconcagua is 23,081 feet above sea level.

Planes are equipped with oxygen, and one can breathe the tasteless gas through a baby-soother attachment on the end of a rubber tube. That is, if you feel dizzy in the rarefied atmosphere. I felt no ill effects, although I took a few whiffs of oxygen just to get my money's worth. But it did take some of nature's most towering creations to help me forget the nausea of other passengers.

We caught a fleeting glimpse of the Christ of the Andes, that magnificent 30-foot statue erected on the border of Argentina and Chile with this inscription: "Sooner shall these mountains crumble into dust than Argentines and Chileans break the peace sworn at the feet of Christ the Redeemer." And then we broke out of the mountains, shook the snow from our wings and spiraled down lazily in the calm sunshine of Chile.

"You will find Chile much different," a Chilean passenger assured me as our airplane swooped into the Santiago airport.

Chile is different all right—its people, politics and problems. It has the most progressive social legislation and the highest infant death rate in the world. Women serve as street-car conductors, and a man named O'Higgins is the national hero. Downtrodden *rotos*² are permitted to vote through 17 political parties. Wine is cheaper than milk. And a ready-to-work, ready-to-fight attitude has put the nation definitely on its own.

This country presents a jarring contrast to the tropical atmosphere and lush meadows of East Coast countries—the grass isn't as green on the Chilean side of the Andes fence. Therein lies one big reason why Chile claims to be a self-made nation, built by pioneers who refused to admit defeat.

After the Spanish *conquistadores* had enslaved the Peruvian Incas, Pedro de Valdivia pushed on south into Chile to see what he could see. He didn't see much: First, there was little gold and silver; second, this was no garden spot; and third, the Auracanian Indians, unlike the Incas, kicked most fiercely when the Spaniards tried to hitch them to a plow.³

² *Roto*, literally means "ragged one"; Chile's name for the poor.

³ They tell this story of gold-hunting Valdivia. Indians captured him, tied him to a tree and told him, "You came for gold. We give you gold!" Melting gold over a fire, they poured it down his throat.

All of this added up to poor investment in Spanish eyes bent on gold and glory, so Chile became the stepchild who was more or less allowed to shift for herself.

Chileans did right well, too, working the land themselves and taking Indian wives. With fighting blood of the Auracanian in their veins, unafraid of hard work, and faced with the necessity of making a living in an unfriendly land, the people of Chile became a "self-made nation."

Although only a bit bigger than Texas, Chile is stretched out into the longest nation in the world, farther than from Chicago to the North Pole. This land of five million people is a mighty thin sliver. Throughout its 2,600 mile length, it is squeezed between the towering Andes and the broad Pacific; at some points it is less than 50 miles wide.

The Weather Man has set the pattern of this nation whose story is too much rain or not enough. The northern third of Chile is the driest desert in the world; in the southern third residents are solemnly certain that it rains "thirteen months of the year." All in all, only about one-fortieth of the entire country is fit for cultivation. That area is concentrated in Chile's middle, an Illinois-sized trough between the mountains which has caught the silt of centuries. Here in the Great Central Valley are found four-fifths of the people, most of the industry and practically all of the agriculture.

Farming has long been the keystone of the nation; furnishing food for the five million people, and a living for half of them. That agriculture, for the most part, has been a feudal system which works poor men and oxen in the field so a handful of landowners can live in town, play politics, acquire culture and loll around Europe between wars. This handful—one-half of one per cent of the people, to be specific—owns 60 per cent of the land. And if you want to wade farther into land-holding statistics you will find that a tenth of the farmers own nine-tenths of the land.

As in the other Latin American countries, these landowners are potent powers behind the throne of government. From early days of independence until 1920, they ran Chile with a firmer grip than Tammany in its heyday had on New York. "The Forty Families of Chile" is the term applied to



He's a Crack Shot. Children are pretty much the same the world over. This young Chilean is drawing a bead with a sling shot, sitting on a giant water jar. Water is valuable and cannot be wasted in the Central Valley of Chile.

them by the "have-nots." Governing Chile ran in the family: one woman was daughter, wife, sister and mother of four Chilean presidents.

Oxen and donkeys are found on every hacienda but the main source of farm power is the *inquilino*. You and I would call *inquilinos* people since they make up more than a third of the population. However, to the landowner they have always been something to be counted with his oxen and horses—to be mistreated and beaten, no; but to perform a certain amount of work in return for their keep and a few privileges.

These landowners aren't wicked—they were just brought up that way. The King of Spain had a hard time coaxing his early warriors to settle down and become farmers, although in the absence of gold and silver, that was about all there was to do. So he made huge grants of land to the chosen few. The land didn't belong to the king, but that didn't bother kings in those days any more than it bothers dictators today. Along with the land went the Indians who happened to be living there. Indians, in those days, were regarded as fixtures of the soil—just as when a fellow buys a farm he expects the right to gather the hickory nuts on it.

These *inquilinos* have in them the blood of these Indians, of early fortune hunters, of hard working Spanish peasants. They are not slaves and they're not entirely free. When a hacienda is sold, the workers are included with the rest of the equipment like serfs on an old feudal holding. Many of the families have lived and worked on the same hacienda for generations. A few who have broken away make up an itinerant labor force working on farms, in mines and in factories.

"Landowners are, as a rule, very cultured and far from cruel," a government official told me. "They just don't understand that *inquilinos* are as human as you and I."

Their homes and working conditions depend upon the *patrón* or landowner just as our Old South had both its Simon Legrees and better natured overseers. I was on one progressive hacienda where 1,000 workers got 30 cents a day each, an adobe house (mud and straw baked into bricks by the sun), an acre of land and the privilege of pasturing the mountainsides. A doctor provided free medical attention, a store sold



She Grinds Her Flour. Between two flat stones, this Chilean woman grinds flour for bread. This picture was taken in her kitchen, and in the background you can see her stove—an open fire with pots balanced over it. No wonder the walls are black.

provisions at cost, and a school and chapel were open to the workers. It is the general opinion that on such haciendas workers are better off than if they had a little land of their own.

But these haciendas are in the minority. I saw many houses with roofs of straw, floors of dirt, and walls of reeds and sticks—held together with a little mud slapped into the cracks. Cash wages vary from 10 to 30 cents a day. Families are perpetually in debt to the *patrón* who takes better care of his thoroughbred horses than his working families. (Of course, I've heard some of our farmers criticized for paying more attention to livestock rations than to their children's food.)

The typical rural family plants squashes, corn and beans to eat, and raises a pig to sell. A pile of husks is usually found where our front porch would be, and corn and pumpkins are on the roof to dry. From the irrigation ditch near the house,

they get water to wash, cook and drink. In a little building set apart, the housewife cooks over an open fire, crushes her flour between two flat stones. Beans is their main dish; they like meat, too, but they seldom get it.

"With modern methods Chile could produce enough food for many times our present population," was the enthusiastic declaration of an official who had visited the United States. And he added, a bit apologetically, "Yet we now must import some of our food."

Landowners have paid little attention to modernization, preferring to stumble along with the wooden plow, used by their grandfathers and great-grandfathers before them. Until a few years ago wheat—the biggest crop, occupying half of the cultivated land—was cut almost entirely with the hand sickle and threshed by horses and mules that trampled out the grain as they did in the days of King Solomon. Many farms still use these methods.

But let's not blame landowners for all of the low production; much of the fault lies with the land. The Central Valley is Chile's garden, yet less than a tenth of it is fit for cultivation. So when we say a farmer has 50,000 acres, to be accurate we should add that two-thirds of it may be in mountain-sides where only goats can be trusted or in water-starved desert where only cactus will grow. While the soil is extremely fertile, 3 to 300 feet deep, it takes irrigation to make things grow.

"If land can be irrigated, it may be worth \$300 an acre. If no water is available, then it's worth only what sheep and goats can chew out of the cactus," a *hacendado* told me. The government has erected a few large irrigation systems but most of them are crude ditch affairs built by the farmers, tapping the rivers at convenient points and irrigating but a small portion of the valley.

The landowners have not been entirely immune to progress. Founded in 1839, the National Society of Agriculture, is one of the oldest farm organizations in the world. It has its own experimental station, veterinary supply and seed house, and a wine section which analyzes and promotes the sale of

wines. The Ministry of Agriculture also has stations where they experiment with all types of crops from wheat to cactus.⁴

Being south of the equator is a surprising experience for a *Norteamericano*. I went swimming in January, suffered from February heat wave, ate watermelons in the patch in March and saw the sun north of me in April. Incidentally, you can't find the Big Dipper in the South American sky; down here you see the Southern Cross. So don't be surprised either when I say that they plant their spring wheat in the fall which is our spring. Because their winters are mild and it seldom freezes, the wheat grows all winter.

After wheat, this is a fruit country. Many Chileans can sit under a vine in the shade of a fig tree, in easy reach of every fruit and nut which a California climate produces. Turned loose on a hacienda I was reminded of the annual advice of my Dad at fair time, as he handed over the spending money: "Now son, don't try to drink up *all* the pop on the grounds." I had to restrain myself from sampling *all* of their fruits.



Science at Work. To search for new crops and improve the crops they already have, is the job of these people in the Ministry of Agriculture.

⁴ Scientists are trying to breed a spineless cactus which will be suitable as a forage and silage crop to be grown on the barren mountainsides.



Mud Oven Bakes Good Bread. In Chile as in other countries the outside mud oven is favored for baking. A fire built inside heats the oven. I had a piece of the loaf she is removing—and I never tasted better.

They have oranges, lemons, olives and figs; apples, pears, peaches and plums; apricots, cherries, strawberries and raspberries. And if that isn't enough you can always get a slice of watermelon. The drawback to the fruit industry is lack of a sizeable domestic market. When one earns fifteen cents a day one doesn't buy many fifteen cents' worth of fruit.

Chile, before World War II exported a few fruits and melons to the U. S. A. She hopes to enlarge this market. Only 15 per cent of her total exports are agricultural. That worries the government because farm products, produced by Chileans with Chilean capital, are the only exports that really bring money into the country. (Her mineral exports are controlled largely by foreign capital.)

Vineyards cover a quarter of a million acres, showing the emphasis placed on grapes; or on wine because most of the grapes—some are actually the size of hen eggs—are more readily marketed in bottles. These people drink wine as farm



Fruit from Cactus. It's good fruit, too, except for the fact the fruits are covered with many tiny prickly spines. That's why this girl is cautiously knocking them off with a broom. Because Chile has so much land that is not good for anything except cactus, scientists are trying to develop cactus that livestock will eat.

boys drink milk. In Chile wine at six cents a quart is cheaper than milk. At every meal they drink it, a different color for every course. (There are complaints that the rural workers in the country do not restrict their wine drinking to meals.)

The winemakers (big landowners again) don't complain about anything except beer. A big battle has been going on between the wine and beer interests with the landowners coming out on top as usual, forcing the government to set a quota on beer production, about 20 quarts per drinker each year. It is even a law that all vinegar must be made from grapes.

Hacienda Chacabuco, typical of the well-run ranches in Chile, presents a beautiful picture with snow-capped peaks overlooking the long eucalyptus-lined lanes, the green fields, olive orchards and vineyards. This hacienda, now owned by a

Yugoslav, gets its name from the famous battle of the same name in which the Spaniards were defeated in 1817, one of the last big battles of the war for independence. I ate grapes from the same vines which shaded the victorious feasting armies of San Martín, Argentine idol, and General Bernardo O'Higgins, hero of Chile.

Chile is not a livestock country. Each hacienda runs a few sheep or goats, depending upon how much mountain or un-irrigated land it has. The government is trying to encourage meat production because much of Chile's meat now comes from Argentine steers which are shod and driven over the Andes to Chilean butchers. Famous Chilean horses are kept mainly for riding. Oxen do most of the work. "They cost less; live on less; require no expensive harness; and are usually killed for beef at the end of their draft careers." These are the perfectly sound reasons advanced to explain why oxen are better than horses. Much of the imported farm machinery has ox hitches.

Little burros do pack work; their main job is to carry charcoal⁵ down the steep mountain trails. Any farmer who has trouble getting skittish mules across deep ditches or narrow bridges could learn plenty from the Chilean. Working on the theory that the less the burro knows the better, he blindfolds his animals before he starts down the mountain; that leaves them in the dark about a lot of things, and there is little trouble.

Chile's southern third is as remote from the rest of the country as Alaska is from Washington, D. C. Excessive rainfall discourages settlers; here one finds trees, sheep, Germans and Indians. The Auracanians kept kicking and fighting back until they were finally conquered around 1880—mainly by white man's liquor. Strong drink moved many a chief to sell huge tracts of land reaching from the Andes to the Pacific. Today these primitive Indians fish, hunt, tend their sheep, weave their clothing and cause much less trouble than some of the so-called civilized peoples of the world.

Speaking of the Germans, there are 40 or 50 thousand of

⁵ Coal is saved for industrial use; charcoal, made from brush on mountainsides, is used widely for cooking.



Lake Region Is Beautiful. In Southern Chile, volcanoes and lakes combine to make a scenic paradise. This section is populated by many Germans.

them in the beautiful southern lake district of Chile. The snow-covered volcanoes and breath-taking scenery in this region has been southern Chile's greatest selling point to date. But there is a vast amount of undeveloped wealth in its timber and grazing lands that industrious German settlers are just beginning to utilize.

It rains too much in the South; in the North it doesn't rain at all. On the way to Peru, I flew nearly 1,000 miles without seeing a blade of grass, a sand burr, cactus or desert rat. Everything is as barren as a tombstone, although I could always look to the east and see the ice-capped Andes. Once in a while a snow-fed river tries to make a race down the steep mountainside for the blue Pacific a hundred miles away, but it falters and wastes away before arriving. Our plane landed

at one dusty spot where natives had not seen rain for 20 years.

Yet half a million people live in this desert, lured there by the nitrates and copper which make up three-fourths of Chile's entire export trade. Nitrates (if it rained here there would be no nitrates) have given Chile her most fantastic prosperity—and also her blackest depression.

It all goes back to the War of the Pacific in 1880 when Chile whipped Peru and Bolivia. As her share of the spoils Chile took Bolivia's outlet to the sea and the rich nitrate fields in the Atacama Desert, the only known deposits of sodium nitrate in the world. These nitrates give life when used as fertilizer; they take life when used in munitions. There has always been a great demand for both purposes—so great that over a period of 50 years, the export tax on nitrates paid up to 68 per cent of Chile's governmental costs.

Those were the days—just like rubber boom days in the Amazon. Big landowners in control of the government taxed nitrates instead of taxing the land. The government had plenty of money. And with all of this "easy" money rolling in, there was a tendency to forget the farm, to let agriculture plod along at an oxen-and-wooden-plow pace.

Then along came a German to burst this prosperity bubble, just as a Britisher had punctured Brazil's rubber balloon. This German, during World War I, invented a process of taking free nitrogen from the air. Scientists in the United States took up the work, and three-fourths of Chile's nitrate market disappeared in the air. No longer did our cotton and tobacco farmers depend upon steam shovels of Chile to dig their fertilizer out of the Atacama desert; the monopoly was broken. This fabulous wealth, taken from Bolivia in war, blew up to create a depression in Chile even before the "thread-bare thirties."

Nitrates are no longer king; copper is now No. 1 Export.⁶ Chile has the biggest copper reserves and the biggest copper mine in the world. At Chuquicamata Mine, a mountain is being

⁶ In 1938, copper accounted for 48% of exports; nitrate and its by-product, iodine, 22.4%. Four-fifths of the world's iodine comes from Chile.

blasted away a chunk at a time, loaded into cars, processed into pure copper and shipped to the United States. (War has made these copper exports doubly important.)

The Sahara Desert does have oases; I've rested there in the shade of palms, eaten figs and watched camels drink their fill. But they don't even have oases in the desert of northern Chile where all food for man and beast must be carried in. Water for these mining towns is piped more than a hundred miles from the Andes, and mining engineers frequently substitute champagne for drinking water.

Because she has minerals and power—more than any other country except Brazil and Mexico—Chile has been heralded as a great potential manufacturing nation. But Chile has more domestic servants than miners; twice as many farmers as industrial workers. This country digs more than two-thirds of the coal in South America and has sizable deposits of iron ore. Unfortunately her coal is of poor quality, scarcely sufficient for her needs. And most of the iron ore is exported to the United States where it is transformed into iron and steel manufactures and returned as two-thirds of Chile's imports.

Another point: Chile has minerals, but Chileans do not own them. They are largely controlled by foreign capital, with Uncle Sam leading the dollar parade. After Cuba, we have our second biggest Latin American investment in Chile, nearly half a billion dollars.

An official put down these handicaps for Chilean industry: "Lack of capital, limited power, lack of raw materials, and small domestic market." However, through a high protective tariff, Chile has built up many small plants to manufacture such domestic goods as foodstuffs, shoes, clothing, soap and cement. Many of these "Made in Chile" items cost the Chileans more than we pay for similar goods in the United States. And our wages are ten times higher. With our mass production efficiency, we could supply Chile with better goods at a lower price. (Of course, Argentines remind us they can supply us with prime beef at a third the price we pay; and Brazilians would jump at the chance to ship us some good cheap cotton.)

The poverty of the *inquilino* is echoed in the cities where wages are pitifully poor, and salaries are not much better. The Industrial Census of 1937 shows that wage earners averaged only \$3.36 a week. Nitrate and copper workers are relatively well paid, earning 71 and 92 cents a day respectively. Textile workers make only 51 cents a day, while the 100,000 domestic servants earn \$2 to \$6 a month. In Chile even if you make only \$40 a month, you must have a servant or two.

Salaries may sound a lot bigger but the same census shows the average salary to be about \$30 a month. School teachers earn a basic salary of \$36 a month, stenographers may get \$6 a week; clerks get less than \$25 a month. The average CIO laborer would feel pretty well fed if he knew that in Chile a laborer must work six to ten times as long to earn enough to buy a loaf of bread, a quart of milk and a dozen eggs; or that more than three persons live in each room in the working districts of Santiago.

"You can't expect blooming health where people do not get enough to eat; unfortunately that is true of many of our people," is the frank admission of a Chilean doctor. Chile has the highest infant death rate in the world; almost half of the children die before they are nine years old and a fourth of them die in the first year, according to medical reports. Incidentally, nearly a third of the children are illegitimate. Weddings are expensive. Another explanation is that women think they can hold on to their men better if they are not married, the theory being that "Marriage brings duties," and men don't like to be bound to be dutiful.

Although poverty has been a blight upon this land of likeable people, there is much hope today among the "have-nots." Government is on the march—a government of, by and for the common man.

In 1920 for the first time in the history of the Republic, the big landowners lost an election. President Arturo Alessandri, son of an Italian immigrant and man of the people, started the ball rolling for the common people by sponsoring what experts say is "the most advanced social legislation in the world." It is so advanced that it is far ahead of the people,



Visitadora Social. This señorita (right) teaches rural folks how to cook and sew and take care of children. She scolds the man who drinks too much, and helps another write a love letter.

the majority of whom are still trying to learn to read and write. But that legislation has had far-reaching effects.

Labor has benefited. The legislation provides for collective bargaining and arbitration of labor disputes; for compulsory worker's insurance and hygienic working conditions; and for unemployment and separation payments. (When you fire a fellow in Chile, sometimes you have to pay him so much it is cheaper to just keep him on the payroll.) A social security fund provides for retirement pensions, lifetime medical and hospital service. Workers can even buy homes for as little as \$5 a month.

The people in the rural areas have not been entirely forgotten although the government treads very softly where large landholders are concerned. An agency has been formed to buy some of the big haciendas, divide them, and sell small farms to the workers. This plan has its drawbacks; few *inquilinos* have the money, equipment or ability to run a small farm.

Informed observers believe the natural process of dividing the land through inheritance will have the desired effect of breaking up these excessive land holdings. Already there are 76,000 holdings of about 40 acres each.

An indication of the changing philosophy of government which has swept Chile during the last 20 years is represented in the work of the *visitadora social*. I spent one of my most interesting days with one of these social workers, visiting *inquilino* homes. She calls on the working families of nine haciendas and teaches them to sew, cook and can. More important, she listens to their problems. With their embroidered pillow cases under their arms, the *inquilino* wives came walking down the dusty road to meet us (on a hacienda whose owner lives in Santiago.)

The story of that day would make a book. In all their ignorance and poverty, the *inquilinos* are a charming people; they're so much like children. One woman asked for medicine and another needed milk for her children; these supplies the *visitadora* gets from the *patrón*. A mother with a barefoot girl in tow asked the señorita to send her daughter to high school so she could get a job in town. An expectant mother was sent to the doctor for medical advice. Another told of the seven members of her family sleeping in two small beds; the *visitadora* promised to get an extra bed from the *patrón*.

"The *patrón* is much interested in helping these people—he's just dimly beginning to realize they are people like himself," she explained.

One woman was near tears. It seems her husband had been drinking too much wine and was cross with the children. So the *visitadora* called this man aside as she would a naughty child, counseling him to be a good husband and father. The 45-year-old fellow, after listening respectfully, promised to be better. And then came an incident that best illustrates the simplicity of these *inquilinos* who until recently have never had anyone to whom they could go for advice and help.

A man of 35, holding his hat in his hand, looking down at his dusty toes in sandals cut out of an old auto tire, earnestly told his story: He was a single man and he wanted to get married. He had the woman all picked out, too; but his sweet-

heart's mother didn't want her daughter to get married. To make the matter more pressing, the foreman had told him that he would have to move out of the house he occupied and make room for a family man. The *inquilino* desperately needed someone to plead his case with the mother. And that was just another job for the *visitadora*.

"These people listen to my advice because they love me," she explained simply. "The *patrón* is helpful, too. And the *inquilinos*—they are children anxious to learn."

One of the most amazing women in Latin America is Graciela Mandujano who is making a gallant fight in Chile to bring learning to the *inquilinos*. She became so insistent that something be done for these "forgotten men" that two years ago the Minister of Agriculture gave her an appropriation for rural education to keep her quiet. "Appropriation" is an exaggeration; she got \$5,000—to educate the vast rural population, four out of five of whom could neither read nor write.

"With this money we printed a simple book and sent it out to the workers who could read a little. We printed another book with which they could teach themselves to write," she explained. "The response was immediate. We received 30,000 letters from these *inquilinos*; they wanted everything from love letters to information on farming and babies. Now we have two trucks manned by people whom we call 'missionaries.' They go out to the rural areas, meet with the people. We teach five things: Hygiene, because we have the highest infant death rate in the world; agriculture, because our farming is primitive; Chilean history and Chilean folklore, to give them pride in their country; and civics, to develop their sense of being a real part of this nation."

When I commented on how far she had stretched \$5,000 she sighed, "Yes, but it's a process of educating not only the workers but also the landowners. Now that there's war in Europe, many of them are staying at home for the first time. Let's hope they become acquainted with their homeland."

The interview was frequently interrupted by phone calls and women sticking their heads in the door for a short and excited conference with Graciela. She apologized and ex-

plained, "It is the city elections. I'm running for office. You know, just for the principle of the thing."

The women of Chile have found real freedom. Although they cannot vote for president, they can vote in municipal elections; and they are as emancipated as any women in Latin America. Women take part in politics; women are in business; women can walk home alone after dark. In the Hotel Crillon every evening the girls came in for tea and cocktails, not a mamma in their midst. I even took a señorita riding in the park—the horse cab was almost as comfortable as Santiago's ancient taxis.

Santiago, capital of Chile, is the focal point of the country with its 800,000 people making up a fifth of the population. Clean-cut skyscrapers tower over the somewhat grubby buildings to present a before-and-after-modernizing appearance to



Schools Teach Handicraft. Chilean schools don't stop at the three R's. Although they have only four grades in the rural areas, the pupils are taught many practical things. These girls learn how to weave.

this 400-year-old city. Fruit stands and beggars are on every corner. For lunch at the Crillon I had lobsters from Robinson Crusoe Island.⁷ Santiago's plaza is no longer the old meeting place where the band plays and the boys and girls wander around in opposite directions—they go the same way today. This liberal trend (we'd brashly call it being up-to-date) is found in the schools, in the Church and in politics.

As I entered one school, the thirty-five pupils automatically stood up (and they didn't wait for their teacher to tell them.) Although they have only four grades in the rural schools, these boys and girls were doing many things besides learning the three R's. The boys showed me their woodworking shop and the girls displayed their weaving and other handicraft. Breakfast and lunch are served to the children and all of their books and materials are furnished by the government. Since the ten million dollar education budget doesn't reach far enough, many children are still without schools, even though by law all children between seven and fifteen must be in school.

Chileans are Catholics; the Church in Chile has been called the most liberal and enlightened in Latin America. Although it was divorced from the government in 1925, it exerts a tremendous influence.

Election time in Chile is a busy time. They have 17 political parties, and if you can't find an outlet for your voting sympathies it is easy enough to start your own party. In the country, rocks rolled together and plastered with mud serve as fences, and also as bill boards for political messages. In Santiago, painters start to work at midnight painting political slogans on the pavements. Here are some of the names you see on the ballots: *Conservadores, Liberales, Agrarios, Democráticas, Democráticos, Radicales, Communistas, Socialistas, Trabajadores, Nacistas.*

With so many parties in the field, it is obvious that no one party can dominate Chile; that is why in 1938 this county had the first Popular Front government in Latin American history. By terms of the constitution, the President is not allowed

⁷ In the Juan Fernandez Islands, 400 miles off Chile's coast, is where Alexander Selkirk spent four years with his wild goats—there are no cannibals.



Easter Altar. Chile like all other Latin American countries is highly Catholic. At Easter time, one sees many such beautiful outside altars made of wild flowers, and green branches, with simple folks kneeling in prayer.

to leave the country during office, or for a year after—they don't take any chances on anybody running away with the treasury. But there cannot be much graft in Chile. The entire budget of the national government is \$90,000,000. The city of Chicago spends \$70,000,000 on education alone.

Although Chile is thousands of miles from Washington, D. C., Uncle Sam is an important gentleman in these parts. We have the biggest foreign investment in the country, con-

trolling her most important exports. We buy most of Chile's goods and provide most of her needs. On the other hand, Chile is important to us. Her 2,600 miles of coastline faces Japan. She controls the vital Straits of Magellan, our water route, should a bomb by chance close the Panama Canal. After much hesitation, Chile broke diplomatic relations with the Axis.

The Chileans are a likeable people and are strong for Uncle Sam. I'm strong for the Chileans. For no matter how poor the home, whether the walls were of mud and the floors of dirt, their never-failing good-bye was "*Tiene siempre su casa, señor!*" which means "This is always your home, sir!"

Chile At A Glance

Size: 286,396 square miles.

People: 5 million; aggressive, hard-working; European extraction with some Indian blood.

Capital: Santiago. Population, 830,000.

Sells: Copper, nitrates, iodine. Some wool, fruits, lentils.

Buys: Textiles, machinery, metals and manufactured products, automobiles, coal, sugar.

Industry: Agriculture employs most people. Mining accounts for majority of exports. Small industry is making some headway.

Chile has some of the most progressive social legislation in the world, legislation that is far ahead of its poor and illiterate population. Large landholdings have dominated Chile in past, still wield tremendous influence.

Bolivia's Tin Treasure

A RICH country of poor people with a tin treasury—that's Bolivia where a handful of whites dominate the government and where the population is more Indian than Bolivian.

Bolivia is about ten times the size of Indiana with fewer people than live in Chicago. Carve the country into farms and every man, woman, and child would have 80 acres each. But Bolivia is one of the few countries in Latin America where agriculture is not the main balance wheel of the country. When it comes to getting three square meals a day, Bolivians are worse off than any other people in Latin America. There are plenty of reasons why.

First, geography: The Great Geographer really shot the works when He fashioned Bolivia. A third of the country lies astraddle of the Andes mountain range where four-mile high peaks are almost as common as corner fence posts. This is the great *altiplano*—nowhere else in the world does a modern civilization exist at such high altitudes. The air is thin at 12,000 feet and a newcomer pants to get enough oxygen. Exert yourself a bit, and you're liable to collapse like a marathon runner breaking the tape. The airports must have long runways to permit the man-made birds to get up more speed because thin air doesn't have as much support as the air nearer sea level. Three-fifths of all Bolivians live on this *altiplano*—in any other country they'd have their heads in the clouds.

The rest of Bolivia slopes down to the untracked jungles of the Amazon on the northeast, and to the scrubby desert of the Gran Chaco on the southeast. Mountains, desert, and jungle—these three all but shut off Bolivia from the rest of the world.

Second, the people: When the Spaniards came to Bolivia 400 years ago they found a lot of Indians—Quechuas, who had long lived under the Incas; and Aymaras, who were described



Bolivia Is Indian. At least five out of every six Bolivians are largely of Indian blood like this woman. She is weaving woolen cloth to keep her family warm. Her little girl has a spindle which she uses to spin the thread that goes into this cloth.

as being "semi-barbarous." (They could have taken lessons in barbarism from "civilized" Spaniards who cruelly harnessed these Indians in slavery.)

Bolivia today is still an Indian nation. At least five out of every six citizens are largely of Indian blood, ruled by the sixth who is white or mestizo. The "native" Bolivians speak their own language and are generally closer to the customs and traditions of their ancestors of a thousand years ago than to twentieth century civilization.

Few places in the world today will you find a more stolid, half-starved individual than the Bolivian Indian, whether he works in the mines for forty cents a day or on a big hacienda for his miserable keep and coca.

By choice he is a farmer with an attachment for the land that is unique. It has been said that in time of famine, the Bo-

livian would rather sell a child than part with a few square feet of worn-out land where his family has lived for generations.

Around Lake Titicaca, villagers own and till the land collectively despite government attempts to break it up. But even this community ownership doesn't lessen his attachment for soil which he considers a vital part of his life. And if a big landowner should acquire this land, more likely than not our Indian friend wouldn't think of moving. So the *hacendado* would acquire this Indian's family along with the land, just like so many buildings.

Only one-sixtieth of Bolivia is under cultivation. There are many fertile mountain valleys which are untouched. But it will take more than Go-West-Young-Man propaganda to coax an Indian to leave his worn-out soil. It was good enough for his great-great-great-grandfather and it is good enough for him.

Although agriculture does not show up in the statistics of Bolivia, to the bulk of the population it is a way of life—but a poor living. On the high plateau, where the air is so thin and cold that trees won't grow, the Bolivian plants potatoes, barley, and corn. He lives in a crude hut made of rocks and dirt and sleeps on the floor—on a sheepskin if he has one. When fiesta day comes, he may kill a sheep and get drunk on *chicha*.

Livestock on the high plateau have slim pickings. Counting the ribs on half-starved cows is as easy as counting rafters on an unshingled house. Sheep are raised for meat and wool. The wool yield is very small—about two pounds every other year or so. Because of the Indian refusal to take up modern methods, it is not uncommon to see a shepherd shearing his sheep with a piece of broken glass.

When you see the Bolivian farmer tediously scratching the soil with his wooden plow, or cutting his barley with a little hand sickle, a few straws at a time, you are not surprised that Bolivia must import one-fourth of her food. This nation buys wheat and cattle from Argentina, rice from Chile, sugar from Peru—all products which might just as well be grown within her own borders.

But the government has paid little attention to agriculture—little more than did the early Spaniards who made Bolivia

their favorite hang-out because their main gods were gold and silver. It was true in the 1500's and it is true today—the spectacular and romantic job of extracting precious minerals is what makes the wheels go 'round in Bolivia.

Bolivia has a tin treasury. This metal alone accounts for as much as three-fourths of Bolivia's total exports. In 1938, a total of 92 per cent of all exports were minerals, largely tin, tungsten, and silver. Tin pays government salaries, tin builds roads, tin buys the things, including food, that Bolivia must have from the outside world.

However, it wasn't tin which brought the Spaniards to Bolivia. They were fascinated by the metal which was "white like the moonlight on Lake Titicaca." From 1544 to 1600, they dug a billion dollars' worth of silver from a single mountain. Or, to be more accurate, they made slaves of the Indians to do this job for them.

The business of mining, with silver in the driver's seat, was more or less fading towards the close of the nineteenth century. Then housewives of the United States found out how easy it was to open tin cans at mealtime and Bolivia got a new lease on life. Her tin became vastly more precious than her silver.

Since 1931, tin production all over the world has been controlled by the International Tin Committee. Each producing area has a quota; Bolivia's quota for 1937 was 49,000 tons. But for many reasons she mined only 24,000 tons.

In the first place, the tin ores of Bolivia are not so rich and are much more complex than those of Malaya. It has been said that without her quota, Bolivia couldn't compete with other tin producing areas of the world. Secondly, transportation rates are fantastic. Although it may cost only \$10 or so to mine the ore, it costs as much as \$50 to get that ore to the seaport, a few hundred miles away.

Because of a lack of fuel in Bolivia, ores must be shipped all the way to Great Britain to be smelted. Bolivia has no coal and imported coal sells for \$30 to \$40 a ton. Woodpiles are unknown. That is why the llama is so important, beyond its willingness to carry pack loads over mountain trails. *Taguia* or dried dung of llamas is used widely for domestic fuel, for steam boilers, and even for small smelters. One mining company uses

thousands of tons of *taguia* and pays the Indians as much as \$4 a ton for it.

Lack of suitable labor is the biggest factor in retarding tin production. Out of her population of 3½ million, only 40,000 Bolivians are miners. Their wages are pitifully small, only 50 or 60 cents a day. (Mining officials say that they are not worth any more, that their habit of chewing coca leaves, from which we get the drug cocaine, makes them only 30 per cent efficient.) And it takes more than fancy wages to coax the average Bolivian Indian to change from his time-honored way of life on the land to the distasteful job of digging ore.

Another factor in the labor situation is the high altitude. Even rapid walking at altitudes of 12,000 feet was enough to make me feel as if I were doing heavy labor. Only those who are accustomed to such high altitudes can stand hard work.



Three Miles High. A great many Bolivians live between two and three miles high in the Andes. Only those accustomed to these altitudes can do heavy labor. Even rapid walking at such altitudes had me puffing like a marathon runner.

I know of white-collared foreigners who must spend several months of each year at lower altitudes to keep their nerves steady. (And yet they want someone to mine ore for 60 cents a day.) The bloody war with Paraguay also cut a big swath in Bolivia's available labor supply. Thousands of Bolivians from the mines died or were killed. More about that later.

Bolivia ranks second to Malaya in world tin production. So when the Japanese took over Malaya in World War II, you can bet Uncle Sam frantically beckoned Bolivia to produce more tin. The United States, it is estimated, uses more than one-half the tin in the world. Without tin, we would be lost. For that reason we are building smelters in the United States to process Bolivian ore.

The biggest name in Bolivia is that of Simon I. Patino, tin king of the world. From a poor mule driver, he rose Horatio Alger-like to control two-thirds of Bolivia's tin. He has not been in his native country since 1922, preferring to live elsewhere, giving the excuse that the altitude is not good for his health. He not only owns Bolivian tin, he also has bought into the British smelting business, and into the companies of his competitors. Patino is Bolivia's most powerful figure, but there's a general feeling that he might use his influence and some of his millions to better the lot of the poor *cholos* who slave in his mines.

"We need foreign capital to develop our minerals," a Bolivian told me. But the government gave all foreign capital the jitters by expropriating the oil properties of Standard Oil in 1937. This company had invested millions of dollars with rather disappointing results. Then, too, it ran into difficulties on marketing the oil. (Argentina, casting covetous eyes at Bolivian oil, placed a prohibitive tax on this oil moving through Argentina.) Bolivia has oil and other valuable resources in undetermined quantities. But she has not the capital to develop them. But neither has her government gone out of its way to make foreign capital feel safe in investing.

How to get around and how to transport goods is the biggest problem in this land of up-and-down topography. Bolivia has only 1,500 miles of railroads and these were built at tremendous costs up mountain sides so steep they would have



Llamas and Airplane. This might be termed the old and new in transportation. Panair and Panagra have accomplished miracles in opening up Latin America. But the llama owner still underbids railroads for carrying some goods through the mountains.

made any except a daredevil turn back. Three of these railroads connect LaPaz with the Pacific coast and another reaches the Argentine system on the east. On the LaPaz-Arica line, the railroad rises so steeply that a cog-rail is used for 22 miles. Because these railroads are so expensive to operate, only goods of high unit value can be transported.

Paved roads are almost as expensive to build. And Bolivia wouldn't have too much use for a lot of paved road—there are fewer automobiles in all Bolivia than in Indianapolis. So that leaves the burros, the mules, and the llamas. Our hats off to them all, especially the llamas. These graceful animals are built for the high altitudes, carry 100-pound loads on treacherous mountain trails with the sure-footedness of a mountain goat. They can live on practically nothing. In fact, many llama pack owners underbid the railroads in carrying goods.

There are vast areas of Bolivia which are undeveloped. Vast quantities of grains could be grown, cattle could be grazed. But the problem is how to get the produce to market. The small settlements of Bolivia are so isolated from one another, and from the outside world, that transporting the merchandise soon eats up the profit. That's why Bolivian agriculture is a subsistence agriculture. Transportation is Bolivia's biggest problem, and there's no solution in sight.

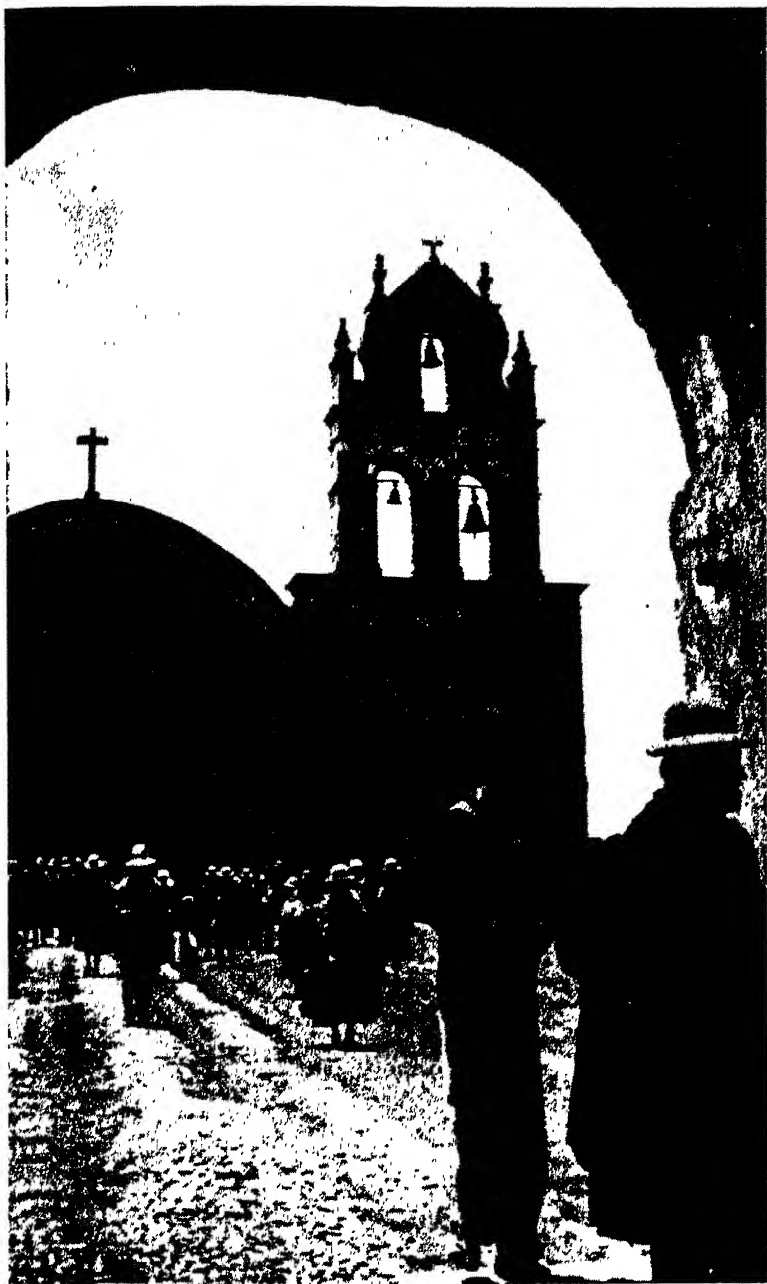
On the eastern slopes of the Andes at altitudes of 5,000 to 8,000 feet is the most livable part of Bolivia. But, here again, the problem is transportation to the plateau and to the outside world. The haciendas, containing thousands of acres, are owned by absentee landlords, bossed by major-domos, and worked by Indians.

Corn is the biggest crop. And, like the stories about Kentucky mountaineers who are alleged to harvest most of their corn crop in jugs, the Indians put most of their corn into *chicha*, a fermented drink which brightens up the fiesta days for the Indians.

Another crop on the terraced eastern slopes of Bolivia and Peru is coca, the shrub from which we get cocaine. Practically every Indian chews the leaves of this shrub. "The garden spot of Bolivia" is the way these eastern slopes are described by enthusiastic Bolivians. But to date, the mule path is the main means of reaching the plateau above.

More than half of Bolivia lies in the eastern plains. In the north, these plains are swallowed by the Amazon jungles where Bolivia once produced modest quantities of crude rubber—6,000 tons in 1917. Cooperative measures are now being taken by the United States and Bolivian governments to boost this production. In the south these plains are dry, covered with grass and scrub. Great herds of wild cattle roam the grassy park land. But this half of Bolivia has less meaning to the average Bolivian than Puerto Rico has to a Hoosier. Again, the bug is transportation.

LaPaz is the biggest city, chief political center and the practical capital of Bolivia, although technically Sucre is the legal capital. You can be within three miles of LaPaz and never know you're near it. Then suddenly you arrive at a tremendous gorge



Oldest Church in Bolivia. This country lies entirely within the tropics. But take a look at the way these folks are bundled up. On the plateau, it is cold all of the time, the mountains are perpetually snow-capped. And coal sells for \$40 a ton.

almost two miles wide, a gash in the earth like the Grand Canyon. Down in this gorge, 1,500 feet below the table-smooth plateau, lies LaPaz, cramped in between the canyon walls. The Spaniards chose the spot—they wanted to get away from the winds which howl across the plateau.

That brings up climate. Bolivia lies within the tropics but it has every variety in the weatherman's book. Its majestic mountain peaks are perpetually snow-covered. And the Indians' ponchos only do a half job of keeping out the chilling winds of the plateau. (Few homes have heat because there's no such thing as cheap fuel—imported coal costs \$40 a ton.) Halfway down the mountain slopes is a temperate climate. And from there you can quickly descend to stifling jungle heat.

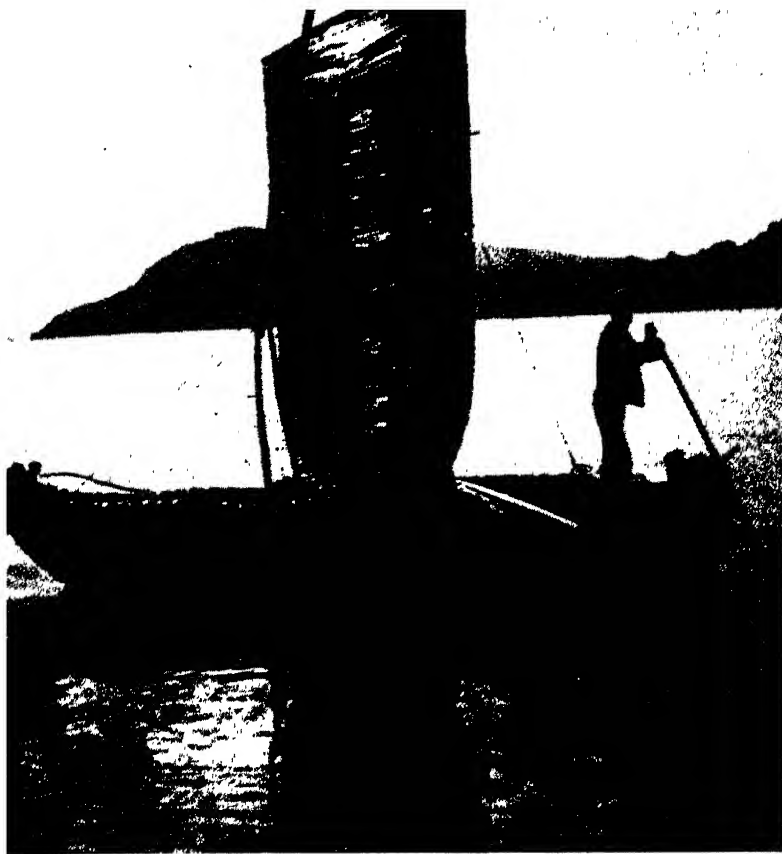
Lake Titicaca, you learned from geography, is the highest fresh water lake in the world. And what a lake! It is 12,057 feet above sea level, 138 miles long, 70 miles wide, and 900 feet deep. Two steamers, one of 1,000 tons, carry passengers on the lake. These steamers were brought overland, piece by piece, on donkey back and finally assembled on the lake.

But the boats that do the most business are the *balsa* boats of the Indians, made of twisted reeds that grow in the shallow waters. There's not much to a *balsa* boat. The reeds are tied in bundles, and the bundles tied together to make the boat. A sail of reeds, like a Venetian blind, sends the boat scooting under the skillful direction of its Indian crew.

Regular meccas for the Indians who live near the lake are two islands—Island of the Sun and Island of the Moon. Indians from all the Andean countries come to visit them, to pay respect to ancient gods, and to ask the Virgin to bless their fields and crops.

Bolivia is a land-locked country, but it was not always so. Before 1879, Bolivia had that stretch of the Chilean desert facing the Pacific. The nitrate beds there caused trouble. Bolivia owned them but Chilean capitalists were exploiting them. There was trouble and during the war of 1879-83, Bolivia lost her Pacific coast and her priceless nitrates to Chile.

That was all the more reason why she should look east for an outlet down the Paraguay river to Buenos Aires. Her desire for such an outlet brought war with aggressive Paraguay. Bo-



Balsa Boat on Lake Titicaca. A familiar sight on this highest fresh water lake in the world are boats made of balsa. The sail operates like a Venetian blind. And if the reeds in the boat become water-logged, all the skipper has to do is drag his boat up on shore for the sun to dry it out.

livia laid her claim to the Gran Chaco on the basis of old Spanish boundaries. Paraguay based her claims on having a few settlers there.

The warlords of Asuncion and LaPaz sent their poor ragged soldiers at each other's throats, struggling over an uninhabited "green hell." After hundreds of spasmodic clashes over a period of years, the nations dealt each other heavy blows during the thirties. In proportion to population, World War I was not more bloody. Bolivia, with three times the population, thought Paraguay would be a pushover. But Bolivian Indians, who had spent their entire lives at altitudes of two miles up, died like flies in the hot swamps of the lowlands. Bolivia lost another big hunk of territory, about 90,000 square miles. She did get the concession of a narrow strip to the Paraguay River, her "outlet to the sea." Bolivia remains a landlocked nation—a sort of buffer

state bounded by Chilean desert, Peruvian mountains, Brazilian jungle, the "green hell" of Paraguay, and scrub desert of Argentina.

There's not much national unity in Bolivia. The population is isolated in their valleys, clustered around mines, and unconnected by transportation routes other than the paths of llamas and burros. The Indian speaks his own language, retains his own customs, and cares little about who happens to be running the country. Few of them can read or write. In the mountains, along the Peru-Bolivia border, Indians are indifferent as to which side of the international border they happen to be on.

Until the Indian of Bolivia becomes a Bolivian, this nation will limp along as a half-starved inland state with riches to exploit but with no strength for their exploitation.

Bolivia At A Glance

Size: 420,000 square miles (estimated).

People: 3½ million. Three-fourths largely of Indian blood.

Capital: LaPaz is the practical capital, although legally Sucre is capital.

Sells: Tin, silver, tungsten. Minerals make up 95% of exports.

Buys: All kinds of manufactured products; foodstuffs.

Industry: Most people engaged in agriculture; mining accounts for most exports. Very little industry.

Bolivia is a rich country in resources, but has tremendous handicaps in geography and an Indian population that is unassimilated in the national life.

VII.

Peru: Land of Llamas, Home of Incas

LAND of llamas, home of Incas, birthplace of potatoes, guinea pigs and the first American University—Peru is one country where you can believe the extravagant language of the tourist travel folder.

This country would make more than a dozen states the size of Ohio. It is made up of deserts so barren they do not even have mirages; mountains so high you pant in the thin air when you cross them; and jungles unsafe even for a Tarzan. But the important thing about Peru is the Peruvians—this is an Indian nation.¹

Before the Spaniard came to the New World, ten million Indians lived in Peru. Today, although their number has dwindled by half, they make up nearly four-fifths of the population. These original citizens no longer own Peru; government is of, by and for the small number of whites, Indians do the work, and the white landlords give the orders.

"You *Yanquis*, you think we all wear feathers," laughingly protested a charming Peruvian señorita. And so I hasten to say the only place I saw feathers in beautiful modern Lima was on women's hats. People of this capital city are largely of European ancestry who need take a back seat to no one in culture and material progress. But Lima is the show window. The Indian population of Peru lives in the mountains, works in the mines and on the plantations. Peruvian Indians, de-

¹ "About one-half of the inhabitants of Peru are full-blooded Indians, one-third are largely of Indian blood, and the remainder is composed of persons of European extraction and of mestizos. There are also a few Japanese and Negroes." U. S. Tariff Commission Bulletin, Peru, 1940.



Indian First, Peruvian Second. This little girl and baby sister on her back is representative of the big majority of Peruvians. They are descendants of the Incas, who built paved roads before Columbus was born. Today they live in mud huts, have little to do with governing themselves.

scendants of the famed Incas, are a far cry from the war whooping redskins of our pioneer days.

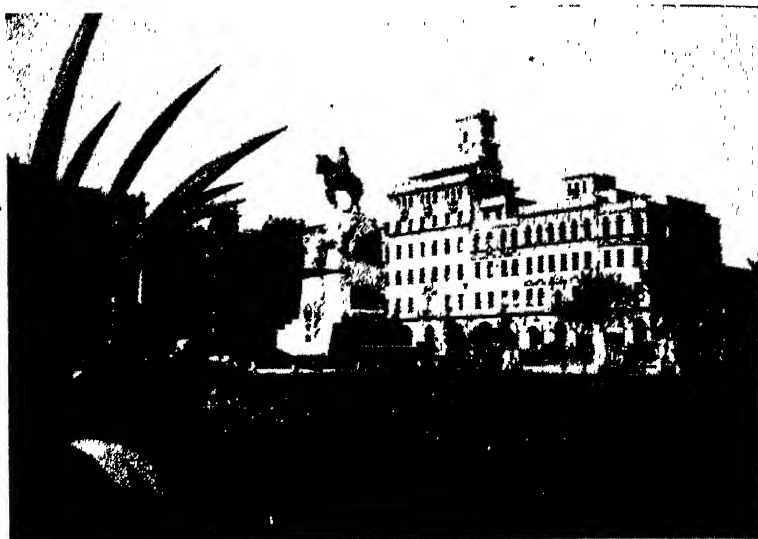
Five hundred years ago the sun worshipping Incas lived in Peru, Ecuador and Bolivia. They paved roads, built suspension bridges and erected buildings which astound present day architects. These Indians constructed elaborate irrigation works; it has been said that in Peru they had more land under irrigation than this nation has today. They developed an enlightened government and there was food and shelter for all. They were fine craftsmen in gold and silver. And these precious metals were the key to their downfall.

Spanish *conquistadores* would move mountains for gold, and Francisco Pizzaro did almost that. With 183 soldiers and 37 horses, he performed the amazing military feat of conquering the Inca millions. He seized Atahualpa, the Inca ruler; then, after Atahualpa had filled a twenty-foot room full of pure gold as the price of his freedom, treacherous Pizzaro coolly ordered the unhappy Inca to be burned to death. Pizzaro changed his orders later when Atahualpa complied with the Spaniard's request that he renounce the Inca religion and accept the Spanish "gospel." He permitted the Inca to be strangled to death.

In their lust for gold and glory, Spaniards cruelly destroyed the Inca civilization, killing, converting and enslaving the sun worshippers. Because Indian slaves mined untold wealth for the crown, Peru quickly became the Spanish stronghold in South America. Goods from all colonies had to pass through Peru on the way to Spain. For 300 years the king, the Church and a chosen few Spanish families waxed fat and wealthy while the Indians sickened and starved.

When rebellion against Spain flamed throughout Latin American colonies from 1810-20, many Peruvian colonists cold-shouldered the idea (as Tories had done during our Revolution). Their declaration of independence in 1824 was more or less halfhearted, forced on them by the patriotic armies of San Martín from the south and Bolívar² from the north.

² In a Lima park stands a statue of Bolívar on a horse. Following the dedication of this monument, the sculptor read the newspaper reviews—and committed suicide, so the story goes. He had forgotten to put a bellyband on the saddle.



Lima Is Beautiful. The white people who govern Peru live in this gleaming city of modern buildings and spacious plazas. However, it is almost a city apart from the rest of Peru. The oldest University in the Americas is in Lima.

Independence hasn't changed Peru too much. Today Peru is a country where Orientals run many of the shops; foreigners, instead of the Crown, operate the mines; white Peruvians still govern, and red Peruvians still work.

"Peru is like your Mississippi," a newspaper man pointed out, "only we have Indians instead of Negroes. The Negro, formerly a slave, is now theoretically a citizen and makes up most of Mississippi's population. But the white man, who thinks he is superior to the Negro, does the voting, runs the government and owns the land. So the Negro still works for the white man, yes."

And the Indian in Peru, an illiterate, poverty-stricken, doped shadow of the great Inca of pre-Spanish days, also works for the white man.

Geographically speaking, Peru is a three-faced country. Along the Pacific west coast it rains about once in 17 years, a simple explanation of why it is desert. The eastern half of the country slopes into the inaccessible Amazonian jungle.

And between desert and jungle rise the inevitable Andes, three and four miles high.

The Humboldt Current is responsible for the rainless coastal plain. This cold body of water creeping up from the South Pole cools the winds and makes them drop their moisture before they reach the parched Chilean and Peruvian shores. In Lima, it never rains—almost never. Last real shower was in 1925, a shower which melted adobe houses, flooded flat roofs and caused almost as much damage as an earthquake.

We flew for 1,400 miles along the Peruvian coast, and only during 40 miles of that trip did we pass over green vegetation. A couple of dozen streams prevent this narrow plain from being a total loss by tearing down the mountains in a race for the Pacific. Little of the water gets that far; landlords siphon off this life-giving liquid to paint their brown acres green. Irrigation thus transforms desert into fertile valleys where Peru's most important export crops are produced—cotton and sugar cane.

Until I came to Peru I thought all cotton was white. But a *hacendado* assured me "Our Peruvian cotton is the whitest in the world." Cotton,³ a long staple variety growing three crops without replanting, is Peru's main cash crop. Practically all of it is exported, although Peru must import several million dollars' worth of cotton goods and fabrics. Indian laborers come down from the mountains to pick the cotton for a few cents a day. They pick it several times during the year, then cut the leathery plant to the ground and use it for fuel. Next year the cotton comes up again.

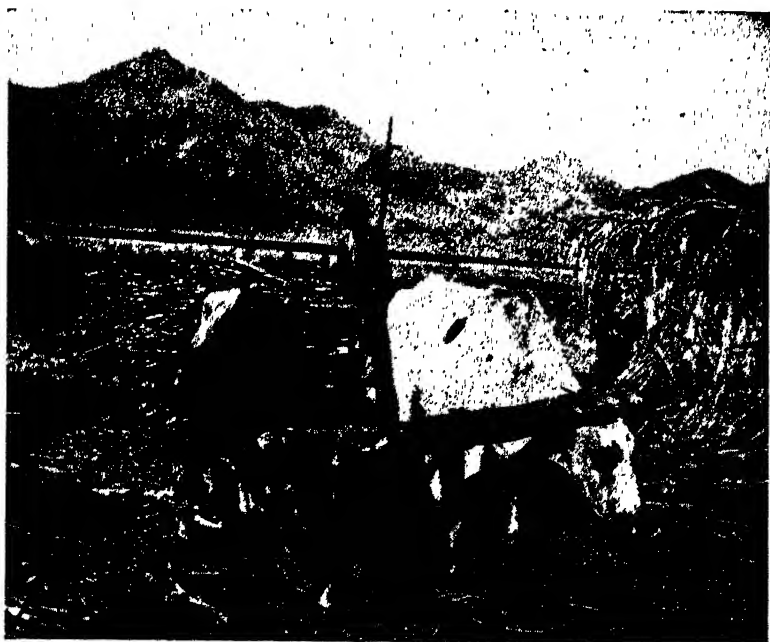
In the 16th century, Peru was already filling many European sugar bowls, and sugar is still No. 2 Export Crop.⁴ Raising cane is big business; 15 haciendas produce all of Peru's sugar, in huge million-dollar mills.

³ Cotton made up 18 per cent of total exports in 1938. Production was 339,000 bales in 1941, second highest in Latin America. War has hurt trade, and there has been a rush in the last two years to replace cotton with flax for fiber. Our government has entered into an agreement with Peru to help stabilize the cotton market.

⁴ Sugar production is about 460,000 tons, three-fourths of which is exported.

In one of these irrigated valleys along the coast I visited Hacienda Paramonga, a big chunk of land producing sugar and providing home and work for 7,000 people. It is really a small city in itself with a hospital, school, club room, church and theater. Sugar cane, 10,000 acres of it, is the main crop. It takes 18 months to produce a crop and they cut cane the year around. They, meaning the Indian laborers again, work for 25 cents a day, get a house to live in, plus a half pound of rice and a pound of beans a day.

The government has wisely foreseen that one cannot live very well on sugar cane and cotton—in lean years it took government loans to prop up these crops—so the law says 10 per cent of each irrigated valley must be in food crops such as yuca, bananas, rice and beans. This irrigated section of Peru, source of one-half of all agricultural production, is in the hands of about 5,000 landowners.



Sugar Cane Goes to Mill. This youngster herds his team of oxen, hauling cane to the sugar mill at Paramonga. Sugar is Peru's second most important export crop. In the background you can see the bare hills. Crops can be grown only with irrigation.



They Walk to Their Farms. Some Indians who own small patches of ground walk many miles to tend it. This woman and her son have cut some corn and some beans and are now taking it home—on their backs.

Every time a bus, truck or auto goes outside a city in Peru, it is stopped by the police for a once-over. On a bus trip up the coast we were stopped by an officer who scrutinized each passenger carefully. He saw two suspicious-looking people. The first, a Japanese, had to show his credentials.⁵ The second suspicious character was Señor Strohm, who had to prove he was just a harmless country boy away from home.

Everywhere along the coast I saw old adobe houses tumbled into ruins. "Earthquake!" a Peruvian explained, and he added casually, "By the way, didn't you feel the one last night?" Shucks, I had slept through an earthquake! However, I was glad I could after surveying the 1940 quake damage.⁶ Describing the panic in Lima and Callao during the quake, a friend told me this story:

⁵ There are about 30,000 Japanese in Peru and recent anti-Japanese feeling had almost provoked race riots long before Pearl Harbor.

⁶ The 1940 earthquake killed 2,000 people; it struck its severest blows at Callao, seaport near Lima. Of 40,000 houses there, 12,000 were completely destroyed and 28,000 damaged.



Birds of Wealth. This is one of the famous islands off the Peruvian shores where birds nest and eat fish. Their excrement, called guano, is valuable as a fertilizer and has been worth more to government than all the gold of the Incas.

"I was in a store when suddenly the ground started pitching beneath our feet like a boat on the high seas. A terrified young lady, fearing the end of the world was in sight, rushed up to a woman standing near me and began confessing all of the sins which she had committed with her *novio* (sweet-heart). It quite took my mind off the quake."

Pizzaro would probably break out of the Lima Cathedral where his bones are laid to rest if he heard us say that bird manure has brought more wealth to Peru than all of the gold and silver mined by the Incas. But it's true. The cold waters of the Humboldt Current teem with fish, and they in turn attract millions of birds which nest on small islands off the Peruvian shore. Their excrement, known as guano, is about 15 per cent nitrogen, and a valuable fertilizer.

Sale of this fertilizer to Europe in the middle of the last century brought fabulous sums of money to the government, and resembled somewhat the nitrate boom of Chile. But guano was sold so fast the birds were disturbed and production dropped. Now the government scientifically farms and rotates these islands, gathering the guano from only half of the islands each year. A total of 130,000 tons is annually disked

up with tractors, sacked and sold, mostly to Peruvian planters for fertilizing their cotton and sugar cane. The cormorant is the star guano bird; each one produces about 25 pounds a year.

Since colonial days, Peru has been ballyhooed as a mining country, but minerals mean little to the average Peruvian. Mines do, it is true, produce two-thirds of the country's export wealth—but for outsiders.⁷ After the gold and silver splurge of colonial days, Peru fell back on the agricultural pursuits of the Incas. Today, nine-tenths of the Peruvians depend directly or indirectly upon agriculture for a living, Indians doing the farming, of course.

Farmers by choice, Indians are content to let the white man live and govern in Lima while they grub a living for themselves and white masters in the valleys and high plateaus of the Andes. They're mountain people, and it takes 20-cents-a-day wages to entice them down to the cotton and sugar plantations on the coast.

More than 4,000 Indian villages own land in common; all of the people work the land and share the profits in the manner of their Inca forefathers. Community plowings and harvests are turned into social celebrations, reminiscent of our quilting party and barn-raising days when the hard cider was passed around. Instead of cider, these Indians drink *chicha*, a fermented liquor made from corn.

A few who have their own tiny patches of land walk many miles to tend it, sleeping in a little grass hut in their corn and wheat fields during harvest. However, most Indians work on big haciendas as did their fathers and grandfathers. When the hacienda is sold they go along with it. In return for their work, they get a small hut, a few cents a day and the inevitable supply of coca.

Most popular spot at the village market is the coca counter where every Indian buys his week's chewing, a hatful of coca leaves. These leaves, source of the drug cocaine, are an indispensable stimulant to the Peruvian Indians. With coca to numb

⁷ With an investment of 200 million dollars, Uncle Sam controls 80 per cent of the oil, most of the minerals. Cerro de Pasco mine, U. S. owned, alone produces 95 per cent of the copper, 75 per cent of the silver, and 50 per cent of the gold mined in Peru.



Coca Market. Most of the Indians in the high Andes chew coca leaves, which keep them drugged and make them forget they are hungry. Under the numbing influence of coca, these people perform unbelievably hard work. This is the coca market at Huancayo.

their fatigue, they perform unbelievably hard tasks and travel for great distances. With a cud of coca in their mouths, you can bet they have no toothaches. It also helps them to forget hunger. As one person bitterly put it, "The Indian must either be given higher wages so he can eat better, or be given coca so he won't know he is hungry."

Along the coast, the big haciendas have tractors and modern machinery, but in the mountains the yoke of oxen is the only heavy work assistant. The Indian breaks his ground with a wooden plow, plants and cultivates by hand. He cuts his wheat with a little sickle and threshes it by giddapping his burros over the straw to trample out the grain. These crude methods perturb a government trying hard to stimulate wheat production.⁸

⁸ In 1941 Peru imported 59% of its wheat; 80% of the rice. To stimulate wheat production, a law provides for mixing wheat flour with 15% domestic rye and 5% *quinoa*, a barley-like grain.

Seasons mean little to the Peruvian farmer. Because of the various altitudes, he plants and harvests wheat, potatoes and corn every month of the year. By the way, you have these Indians to thank for those potatoes you ate for dinner—Irish potatoes came first from Peru. The housewife preserves potatoes by freezing and drying them in the sun; by boiling, slicing and drying them until they become as hard as rocks, she can keep them for years. Speaking of food, on my first visit to an Indian home I was surprised to see fat guinea pigs running over the kitchen floor. In Peru, ancestral home of all guinea pigs, these animals are the Indian's fried chicken.

When it comes to being shy, a shrinking violet would look like a sunflower alongside a Peruvian Indian. One day in the Andes, when I started to take a picture of an Indian woman, a pig on her back, she promptly turned the other way. I executed a circling movement, and again made a frontal approach. Again she turned. After persistent maneuvering I suddenly felt strangely dizzy, and found myself panting like a hound dog after a long August rabbit chase. I sat down in a hurry—and my picture subject got away. But I'd learned my altitude lesson. At three miles high, to get sufficient oxygen you have to breathe three times instead of twice.

In the mountains we saw many groups of llamas, their heads held high as if they were high-hatting the *gringo* who dared point a camera at them. This relative of the camel, the only native American animal big enough to work for man, has been the most valued possession of the Andean Indian for centuries. Llamas provide meat and milk. Their wool means clothing. They are the only dependable pack animals over the precipitous mountain trails. And their excrement provides the fuel on high plateaus where climate is too severe for trees.

Llamas are gentle, but in the llama mind 100 pounds is a load limit. Llama drivers insist that if you put one more pound on the llama's back, he will lie down and refuse to budge until the load is lightened. And if you tease him, he'll spit right in your face.

A woolly relative of the llama, alpaca by name, is kept in domesticated herds and produces the finest commercial wool



Llama—Camel of the Andes. These high-necked creatures are, first of all, pack animals, but they also provide meat, wool, milk, and fuel for the Indians in the high mountains. They refuse to carry more than 100 pounds. Tease them, and they'll spit right in your eye.

in the world. The extremely clever Peruvian Indians sit on the dirt floors of their humble adobe huts, spinning, weaving and dyeing much of this alpaca wool into richly colored fabrics. Dull-appearing and poverty-stricken though they may be, these Indians wear colorful homespun woolens fit to decorate a store window in Marshall Field's or Macy's.

At 4 a. m. on Easter Sunday, I was awakened high in the Andean village of Huancayo by the explosion of firecrackers and a brass band. I left my 30-cent hotel room (comfortable, too, if you don't forget to bring your own soap and toilet tissue) to find the village thronged with Indians in their gay-colored clothing.

Moving down the street on the shoulders of many men were two huge effigies of Jesus, 20 feet high. From the balconies people were throwing rose buds and showering petals on the procession. Indian mothers crowded close so the petals would fall on their babes. Men held up their hats to catch the petals; and as the procession went by, small children and old

women picked up the scattered flowers and thrust them into their bosoms. For two hours the Indians paraded while fire-crackers popped and the brass band played mournful music. Then, just as dawn was breaking, they went into the church to kneel, and to nurse their babies. I have never witnessed anything like it outside of China.

This Easter celebration soon gave way to their weekly Sunday fair, a pageant in Technicolor. For miles around these people had come to swap and worship, to buy and visit. Llamas picked their dainty way down the village street, red ribbons tied in the ears of the leader. Mothers, wearing half a dozen petticoats, each a rainbow in wool, walked along spinning their yarn. They were seemingly unmindful of the babies slung on their backs in the multicolored shawls; or if it wasn't a baby, it was a lamb or pig to be sold at the market. The streets were clogged with squatting Peruvians who sell their pottery, silver ornaments and homespun fabrics and buy a hatful of coca, some potatoes and maybe a scrawny pig.



Hogs for Sale. These scrawny razor backs are part of the hog market at Huancayo. I saw one woman carrying a pig to market—slung in a cloth on her back just like other women are carrying children.

I doubt very much if the proud Inca of 1443 would recognize his 1943 descendant who works like a dog to keep eating, and chews coca to keep working. Long dominated by the Church, army, and landholding aristocracy, Peru has little place in its political life for the Indian masses. Peruvians (white variety) are quick to point out that there is no color line, no social prejudice against the Indians. Many of them have reached high positions of responsibility. And they contend much of the trouble lies in the Indian's refusal to change his ways and customs. But only recently has there been a growing realization that Peru's future must lie in Indian progress.

"When you play poker you must play with the cards you hold, even if they aren't what you want. Peru must work with the resources and peoples we possess," declared one top government official.

Peru's biggest political party has given impetus to this trend. This party, many believe, would win a free election hands down, *but it is outlawed by the government*. (Something like prohibiting the New York Yankees from playing baseball.) The *Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana*, Apra for short, stands for democracy, division of the land, and more education and government for the Indian. It was founded by Haya de la Torre as a protest against the short-sighted Indian policy.

Mahatma Gandhi once told me, "I want complete independence for India. But if independence now would mean much bloodshed, I am content to wait longer for the independence which is sure to come." That sums up the attitude of Haya de la Torre—he wants democracy for Peru, but does not want a bloody revolution. He has been in prison or exile for 16 years, and even now has to hide out from the police. Thousands of his followers are in jail or in exile. Recently a United States publisher sponsored a Latin American novel contest to promote better understanding between the Americas. The winning novelist was Ciro Alegria, an exiled Aprista living in Chile.



I Get a Spanish Lesson. These school girls got a good giggle out of teaching me the Spanish words for cat and dog. Only one out of every ten Peruvians can sign his name or read a newspaper. There are no schools now in areas where half the people live.

"If only the United States, as defender of American democracies, would exert pressure on our government," a Peruvian writer suggested, "then we would have a change in Peru."

But Uncle Sam, since he has turned Good Neighbor, has shown a reluctance to interfere in the internal affairs of nations, even though the practices of some of his so-called democratic buddies must make him wince. Peru is friendly towards the United States, and war has increased their interdependence tremendously.⁹ The recent visit of President Manuel Prado, who came to the United States on the invitation of President Roosevelt, has helped cement our relations.

The Peruvian government is undermining the Aprista strength by instituting progressive social legislation; 30-day vacations with pay; 3½ hours between morning and afternoon work sessions; health insurance, better housing and education.

First step in rehabilitating the Indians lies in education. Most of them do not even speak Spanish and nine-tenths of

⁹ In 1938, Peru bought 34% of her total needs from the United States; 1939, 41%; 1940, 53%. Our imports from Peru have increased from 26% to 42% in the same years.

them cannot read or write any language. According to a recent presidential report, there are no schools now in areas where half of the people live. Schools are now being built and teaching facilities expanded, but Peru's budget is small. Of course, higher education has not been neglected; San Marcos University, founded in 1551, is the oldest university in the Americas.

"We need education, but not too much of the kind which makes all of our young people want government jobs or law degrees. First, we must teach them how to farm," declared a leading agriculturist. The government is working through agricultural schools and experimental stations. One example: To improve sheep, Indians are permitted to trade their scrawny bucks for purebred rams.

An organization of land owners, hiring its own technicians, is promoting good farming methods. "La Vida Agricola," Peru's only farm paper, is doing a good job of spreading agricultural information throughout the country. Publisher Gerardo Klinge, with an eye on Uncle Sam's needs, is now promoting a Peruvian campaign to grow items not now grown in this hemisphere. "American self-sufficiency," he calls it.

One of these items is *cube* root, and there's a story behind this lowly root. Years ago, Señor Klinge saw Indians spread oits of the root on the water. It stunned the fish, and all the Indians had to do was wade in and pick them off the top of the water. They ate the fish and weren't poisoned. Señor Klinge reasoned these roots must kill cold-blooded animals, without bothering the warm-blooded ones. He put it to work killing ticks on llamas.

Today, rotenone extracted from the *cube* root is one of our most potent insecticides—it is 30 times as poisonous as lead arsenate. Half of the United States rotenone supply formerly came from the Dutch East Indies, but World War II is making us largely dependent upon the *cube* root of Peru and *timbó* root of Brazil.

Rubber, however, is the item which ranks first in the "American self-sufficiency" plans, and Peru has rubber. Not much now, but real possibilities. United States technicians are now in Peru to help enlarge production of wild rubber. The

first cooperative experiment station in the Americas has been established by the United States and Peru at Tingo María, on the eastern slopes of the Andes. We've almost overlooked the untouched jungle east of the Andes which occupies one-half of Peru's territory.

Although few Peruvians have ever seen this part of the country, Peru and Ecuador have been feuding for 100 years over their boundary in this region. The disputed territory is a slice of jungle four times the size of Indiana. A flare-up in 1941 resulted from the note of an Ecuadorian diplomat who said his government wanted to arbitrate the boundary line but didn't know if Peru could be trusted. Peru's answer was to load mountain cannon on the backs of burros and trot them to the border. The February, 1942, Rio conference of foreign ministers settled the question, at least for the time being, giving one-fourth of the disputed territory to Ecuador, the rest to Peru.



They Loaded Cannon on Mules. After 100 years of feuding over a boundary dispute, Peru and Ecuador at last have composed their differences. The only way to get soldiers like these to the battleground was to put them and their weapons on mules.

This untapped jungle, now producing a little wild rubber, fruits and coca, has vast potentialities—if the stuff could be transported to market. There are no railroads and few roads into this area; and, unless you go by plane, it takes two weeks to travel the 650 miles from Lima to Iquitos, a port on the upper Amazon. However, considering the tremendous mountain and jungle obstacles, Peru has a remarkable transportation system. Planes fly mining machinery into otherwise inaccessible regions. Peru is one of the first Latin American nations to complete her section of the Pan American highway.

An auto trip over the Andes would send the writers of travel ads soaring into spasms of rhetoric. Eighty-five miles after leaving Lima you are on the highest paved highway in the world, about 15,950 feet above sea level. You ascend a mountain so steep that at times you feel like jumping out and chocking the back wheel. You look up and see the sheer mountain walls crowding the road so closely that you can hardly see the sky. Scenery props include everything from glaciers to llamas. One road, carved into the eastern mountain-side, is so narrow that you drive east on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturdays, and west on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Beware of Sunday traffic—it moves both east and west.

And if you make a trip into the mountains don't forget to see that all wheels are screwed on tightly. On one trip, the front wheel of our car casually dropped off, the car swung sideways in the one-way road and left us overlooking a 1,000-foot drop. I had to hitchhike my way down the mountainside, and an Indian truck driver gave me more thrills than a dozen Saturday nights of movie serial. Many places the road was one-way with sharp curves, steep cliffs and no fences. My driver had to pump his brakes at least four times before they would take hold. And to give me that added feeling of security, every time we approached a dangerous curve, he took one hand from the wheel to cross himself.

Holy Week in Lima is a week of celebration, but the Easter parade is mostly military; women's dresses are black, and the Easter bonnet gives way to the lovely black mantilla. On Good Friday I saw the President, Archbishop, cabinet ministers and generals, every man with a name in Peru, march



President Goes to Church. I took this picture of President Prado (without hat), his cabinet ministers and other high officials, as they marched from the presidential palace (background) to the Cathedral for high mass on Good Friday.

into the Cathedral for a special Mass. I went into the church, too.

I was standing reverently, camera in hand, when someone nudged me in the ribs. A fellow motioned for me to follow, and I thought perhaps I'd violated some law. My guide unlocked an iron gate to a private chapel, and closed the door behind. Then, with a dramatic gesture, he flashed on the light, pointed to a glass box and said, "Pizzaro!" The box was full of bones, the 400-year-old skeleton of Pizzaro, conqueror of Peru.

My guide had spotted this *gringo* (meaning a blonde foreigner) and knew I would certainly give a nickel for a glimpse of Pizzaro's bones. It is said that this enthusiastic caretaker will, for a small sum, even show you Pizzaro's bones when he was a small boy.

Peruvians do not like criticism. Their own newspapers, magazines and public speakers are not permitted to even hint

in a critical manner. So, when Peruvians hear a foreigner speak freely of abuses in Peru, they're convinced the foreigner is just making nasty cracks. They promptly ban any books, magazines or movies which do not confine themselves to the glories of Peru. I had the misfortune to arrive on the heels of a writer for a popular U. S. picture magazine who "grossly misrepresented Peru." The head of the Touring Club lectured me for one hour on the misdeeds of American journalists.

"What if I were to come to the States, go through the South where your Negroes live their wretched lives, take a turn in Chicago's slums, return to Peru, and say that's the picture of the United States? Wouldn't you resent it?" he asked.

Since Peru is a fascinating country, I don't want to be banished from returning. So I want to put myself on record: While Peru is an Indian country with a tremendous Indian problem, Lima is one of the most beautiful cities in the Americas. It has modernistic buildings, a fashionable race track, cocktail lounges and swimming pools. It has marvelous museums, cultured people and fine universities.

When the rural areas are as advanced as the capital city—Peru will take her place in the front rank of progressive nations.



Peru At A Glance

Size: About 500,000 square miles; nine times bigger than Illinois.

People: 7 million; four-fifths of all Peruvians are Indian descendants of Incas.

Capital: Lima. Population, 450,000.

Sells: Petroleum, copper, cotton, sugar, gold, wool.

Buys: Machinery, vehicles, wheat, cotton goods, manufactured goods, chemicals.

Industry: Nine-tenths of people depend directly or indirectly on agriculture. Small industry is expanding. Mining is controlled by foreign capital.

Peru has a tremendous problem making the Indian a part of Peruvian national life.

VIII.

"Ecuador Es Muy Linda!"

"*E*CUADOR *es muy linda, si?*"

The president of Ecuador greeted me with that question and, as is the Latin American custom, generously provided the proper answer.

"Ecuador is very beautiful, yes!" was my parrot answer for two reasons—you don't say "No" to presidents on such debatable matters as scenery; and no American president has a better right than Ecuador's Arroyo del Rio to say that his country is beautiful.

Often called the Switzerland of South America, Ecuador is a charming country astraddle the equator where you can live in luxury on a dollar a day. It has rich natural resources, is more peaceful than Eden before the serpent, and is still more or less isolated from even its neighbors. I might add, to a war-weary world, Ecuador is looking for settlers.

An appealing natural charm and lavish scenery overlie the grimmer aspects that Ecuador has in common with many Latin American countries. Some of her handicaps are: Overnight changes in government, as manifested by a dozen presidents in ten years; a poverty-stricken people; little immigration; an unassimilated Indian population; and a pitifully small budget with scant provision for such things as education and public improvements.

You must use adjectives, not statistics, to describe Ecuador. A census has never been taken, although there must be "something over 3 million people in the country." The size of the country is anybody's guess since estimates vary from 337,000 down to 180,000 square miles. It depends, too, on whether you look at a Peruvian or an Ecuadorian map; maps made in Peru shrink the country to a mere 60,000 square miles. However, the Rio conference in February, 1942, settled the century-old bor-

der dispute and now Ecuador has an area, at least for the time being, roughly twice the size of Illinois.

Outside the cities of Quito and Guayaquil, Ecuadorians live close to the earth. They build their homes of dirt, bamboo poles and palm leaves. They take wool from their sheep, spin it into yarn and weave it into clothing. They heap up dirt to make fences, whittle plows from wood and concoct home remedies from herbs. They make water jugs from clay, grind corn and wheat between flat rocks, and use banana leaves and corn shucks for wrapping paper. They grow corn, barley and beans



Fiber for Sandals. This little girl will probably go barefooted most of her days. But men wear sandals. And they get fiber from the henequen plant by putting the leaves down on the road so the pulp will be chewed away leaving long fibers like the strands of binder twine.

to eat, and their surplus crops account for half of the exports. The entire country is more rural than the horseweed bottoms of the Wabash where I was born.

Industrial production has never reached first base in this nation where four out of five look to the soil for their living. Oil and mineral products do account for 40 per cent of the exports, but foreign capital controls this wealth. Lacking iron and coal, local industrialists have had to be content with manufacturing such things as cotton cloth, cigarettes, soft drinks, cement and shoes. One household industry is justly famous. Ecuador is the home of Panama hats, so-called because they were first exported to Panama and re-sold to all parts of the world.

Back in the days between World Wars when presidential fishing trips were hot news, I used to read dispatches about "the President's battered Panama." And I day-dreamed (as I slapped the mules and adjusted my also battered straw hat) how wonderful is democracy when presidents and farm boys both wear straw hats. In Ecuador, I learned that the distance between farm hand and president is greater than I thought—a good Panama sells for \$100.

These hats, woven from the fiber of the toquilla palm, range in price (in U. S. shops) up to \$200. Sometimes it takes a patient Indian several months to complete a fine hat—so fine it can be rolled up and put through a finger ring. Several weeks of work will produce a \$25 hat; the worker gets a paltry \$1.50 for it. If you don't want to offend these patient craftsmen, never ask for a *Panama* hat in Ecuador—the proper name is *Sombrero de Jipijapa* or *Sombrero de Montecristi*, depending upon where it is made.

Ecuador has three almost equal geographical sections: In the lush tropical plain next to the Pacific, one-third of the people live and produce most of the export crops. Of little economic importance is a slice of almost unreachable head hunter's jungle in the interior. And rising between these two regions are the temperate mountain uplands where most of the people live. First, the coastal plain.

After 2,000 miles of flying over the barren coast of Chile and Peru where rain drops are rare as meteors, Ecuador looked



Panama Hats in Ecuador. The genuine "Panama" hat comes from Ecuador, costs anywhere from \$10 to \$150. The correct name, if you're interested in buying one, is Sombrero de Jipijapa or Sombrero de Montecristi, depending on where it is made.

like a Garden of Eden. Parched desert suddenly gave way to tropical tangles, and as our plane circled to land at Guayaquil I saw rafts and dugout canoes drifting lazily down the river, brimming over with the chief products of the coastal region—cocoa, coffee, children and bananas.

If you drank cocoa 30 years ago, chances are one in three that it floated down this same river in a dugout canoe. Until 1910 Ecuador furnished one-third of the world's supply of cacao beans. As the sweet-toothed world asked for more bonbons, plantation owners grew rich. Rather than invest in their own country's development, they took their wealth to "civilized" Europe for diversion, leaving their cacao plantations in the hands of lackadaisical overseers.

As has happened before to one-crop countries, Ecuador's market faded, almost before rich landowners could return from

overseas philandering. Witchbroom disease hit the trees, production decreased and inferior quality beans went into the trade. High export taxes prompted Africa and Brazil to start growing cacao, and Ecuador's share of the world market dwindled to three per cent. However, these chocolate beans are still Ecuador's top export.¹ Side streets of Guayaquil are literally "paved" with chocolate, barefoot boys wading through the drying beans to turn them in the sun's rays.

Uncle Sam is by far Ecuador's best customer, taking most of her cocoa, coffee, beans and balsa, all produced in this fertile area along the coast. Balsa,² weighing only half as much as cork, is used by Ecuadorians for rafts and canoes to float their produce to market. Meandering streams are the only highways in this section. It is not unusual to see a native in a dugout canoe, swimming steers to town, two or three on each side of the boat, tied by their horns to a crosspiece.

All along the streams are little bamboo shacks on high stilts, thatched with palm leaves to keep out wind and rain, with naked youngsters sitting on the steps. Although big plantations control most of the production, many of these Ecuadorians grow a little rice and a few bananas to eat, then hunt tagua nuts and cut balsa for a living. (Like some farmers I know who plant by the moon, these natives cut logs only during certain phases of the moon.) Tagua, or ivory nuts, are the next best thing to an elephant's tusk for poker chips, umbrella handles and buttons—mostly buttons. These nuts grow on stunted palms, but peculiarly enough only the female palm produces fruit.

Headquarters for this fertile coastal Eden is the port of Guayaquil, biggest city in the country, but once known as the "hell hole of South America." It is now a respectable city since bubonic plague and yellow fever have been obliterated by the joint work of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau and the Rockefeller foundation. An intensive rivalry exists between

¹ Cacao bean production has fallen from 100 to 40 million pounds. In 1938, cacao comprised 23% of total exports; gold and silver, 21%; crude oil, 15%; coffee, 10%; rice, 6.4%; bananas, 4.5%; tagua, 4.2%; crude rubber, 2.5%.

² We use balsa wood for model airplanes, insulation and life preservers. A balsa log 40 feet long, 15 inches in diameter, will support a load of two tons in the water.

Quito, the capital, and this city of 125,000 with the metropolitan air, where a brass band plays during fires.

A two-hour plane flight from hot and sticky Guayaquil to Quito is like breaking out of darkest Africa into Switzerland. As we hurdled the mountain barrier that fences off the coastal plain from the rest of Ecuador, I could see scenery and crops changing in the space of minutes. And as I stepped from the plane at the Quito airport in my tropical suit, I could *feel* the climate was different. Although Quito is only 15 miles from the equator, I slept under blankets, saw my breath every morning, and wore a coat to keep warm in the high altitude of the Ecuadorian plateau.

In these mountain uplands and picturesque valleys, two miles above sea level, live two-thirds of the country's population. Like Peru, Ecuador is an Indian country. The Quechua-speaking Indians are fascinating people with a dignity and culture all of their own. Needing little from the outside world, they are content to stick to the farming and agriculture of their ancestors, and let the white minority fiddle with politics. They were never fully conquered by the Incas before the coming of the Spaniard. And, while extremely poor, they are not as poor as their Peruvian cousins.

Many of them own their own little plots of ground or live in a village which has its communal acres. Large haciendas still predominate, however. Laborers on these haciendas are paid seven cents a day for the days they work and are given a little piece of ground to farm for themselves. While they don't always put out too much work for the *patrón*, these laborers are model farmers on their own little plots, carefully gardening every square foot.

Their huts, picturesque to the eye of the painter perhaps, are rather crude to one accustomed to kitchen, bedroom and bath. More often than not a single room houses the entire family, with a pig and a few chickens squeezed in. Cooking is done over an open fire, the smoke seeping out the best it can. Their beds are hard cots without beauty-rest trimmings, or straw mats on the dirt floor. Although this may sound a bit primitive in 20th century civilization, you would realize they have a culture all of their own if you once saw these women spin, dye



Picturesque But Primitive Huts. This is a typical hut in Ecuador where the people are largely of Indian blood. Most of them make their livings from the soil and retain their old customs and language of pre-Spanish days. They cook over an open fire, and the floors of their homes are of dirt.

and weave wool into colorful fabrics and ponchos—particularly those ponchos.

The poncho is a woolen blanket with a slit in the center which the Indian slips over his head and uses as an overcoat. Since it is worn in many Latin American countries, Clarence Moore of Radio Station HCJB, Quito, has a bright idea. "Use the poncho to spread Good Neighbor feeling in Latin America," he urges. "Have some prominent football coach adopt these extravagantly colored woolen ponchos as jackets for the boys who sit on the bench. Newsreels of football stars in ponchos will be more wildly heralded down here than visits of movie stars," contends Moore. How about it, Illinois or Notre Dame?

Ecuador is on the equator but climate varies from hot to cold with the altitude. The Pacific coastlands are as tropical as bananas, while the uplands are temperate enough to grow the corn, wheat, potatoes and beans that feed Ecuador. Wheat and potatoes are grown on huge haciendas, while corn, barley and



Cut Wheat with Small Sickles. Much of the wheat and barley is cut like this—a handful at a time. Steep hillsides and small fields would make combines useless even if they had them.

beans are planted in tiny patches on hillsides steep enough to be unsafe even for a mountain goat.

This is not a livestock country, although they keep sheep because sheep mean clothes. Their cattle are mostly draft animals which pull their wooden plows and oxcarts—butter is mostly for the wealthy and milk is only for babies. Donkeys do most of the hauling over the treacherous mountain trails, supplanting the llama who refuses to carry more than 100 pounds. The patient donkey has no such union regulations.

Outside many huts I saw a lonesome pig tied up with a rope. The pig furnishes grease for frying the favorite Indian dish—shelled corn. These people crunch it with gusto and, incidentally, build up a set of strong white teeth. (I found it something like eating unpopped grains from the bottom of the popcorn pan.) This country has been importing a great deal of lard from the United States.

"But if you import lard, why don't you raise more hogs?" I asked.

"What would we do with the meat?" was the surprising answer. They eat little meat, and lard is more expensive than butter.

Biblical methods of planting and harvesting are still used throughout Ecuador. It is a stirring sight to see men cutting wheat with their little hand sickles, swinging in rhythm and chanting together like a bunch of Volga boatmen: "Better keep working—the sun's coming up! Better keep going—the sun's going down!" Or words to that effect. At the end of the harvest these laborers know there will be all of the *chicha* they can drink; and it is no inconsiderable amount of this fermented corn beverage a harvest hand can pour down a parched throat. On some of the inaccessibly steep mountainsides, these farmers could not use binders or combines if they had them.

The bundles of wheat are carried on the backs of men or donkeys and dumped on the threshing floor, a spot on the ground where weeds and grass have been cleared away. Horses, donkeys or oxen mill around on the straw, literally kicking



Farmers Are Own Wagons. These farm hands pile great loads on their backs, carry the hay and other crops in from the fields.

out the grain. A man with a pitchfork (a forked wooden sapling) tosses the straw in the air to let the wind help separate the wheat from the chaff, and the women finally sift the precious grains of wheat with small hand screens.

Precious is the word; wheat in Ecuador was selling for \$1.20 a bushel. (Stack that up with their harvest wages of 10 cents a day.) This country imports half of the flour she needs, mostly from the United States. Flour and lard together account for 13 per cent of her imports, a drain of \$1,500,000 on a country which has little money. Imported cotton goods take another \$1,000,000.

"We should grow these products," an economist told me, "because our future lies in our agricultural development." Others contend it is cheaper for Ecuador to import flour and lard from the United States. And still others hint that politics and desire for graft prompts such statements.

Many factors have conspired to hold back the economic development of the country. For one thing the government has



Colts Help Thresh. After the wheat is cut, it is placed on the threshing floor. Then, as in this picture, horses, oxen or burros walk over and over the grain, literally kicking the grain from the straw. And the fellow on the left tosses the straw up in the air with his wooden sapling pitchfork so the wind can help separate the wheat from the chaff.



Woman's Work. Then the women take the heads and sift the grain through sieves. Threshing is a long drawn-out affair in Ecuador and many of the other Latin American countries.

not been overly stable. Officials have no time to think of building a school, mapping a tax program, or developing agriculture—their first worry is trying to remain in office.

Then there are the Andes mountains which have isolated sections of Ecuador as effectively as if they had been walled in. Only donkeys can carry produce from one region to another. In Guayaquil, it is easier to import certain food items than to get them from the upland districts. In order to deliver a new tractor, a dealer told me he had to use the tractor and twenty men and spend five days making a road to the hacienda. The eastern jungle is almost unpopulated because mountains and jungles have held back transportation.

A third factor is the large Indian population, suspicious since Pizzaro's day of the white man's way. Money means little to them, and ten times the usual wage would not tempt them to work on fiesta days. They cling to their customs, have their own Quechua language, and few speak Spanish. "But could they not be educated?" I asked.

"If we educate the Indian we will have no one left to do the work," a *hacendado* frankly replied. "Take away the Indian's poncho, and he wants to be a lawyer."

The history of Ecuador reveals another potent weakness. After gaining independence from Spain in 1822, Ecuador together with Colombia and Venezuela formed one republic. Since Ecuador during Spanish rule had been a separate political division, some of the adults thought it would be a great idea to set up housekeeping on their own. In 1830, Ecuador (like Venezuela) withdrew from the union to form the Republic of the Equator. Wars followed with Colombia and Peru over boundaries. Today, 112 years later, the last border feud has just been settled.

Neutral observers have written that sentiment, not horse sense, prompted Ecuador to embark as a separate republic. They point out that the size of the country has dwindled under pressure of stronger neighbors; that foreign trade is the lowest per capita in South America; that funds are needed to develop a country so divided by mountains that only mules can get from farm to market; and finally, that Ecuador has a



School Boys Pose. And look at the way they throw out their chests. Only through education will the Indian of Ecuador become an Ecuadorian.



Their First Tractor. This was the first tractor many of these Indian farmers had ever seen. And it was a joy to behold the way that red monster tore up sod which for centuries had been disturbed only by wooden plows. Picture was taken at a government agricultural experiment station. There are only about 50 tractors in all of Ecuador.

budget of only \$8,000,000. The city of Chicago spends nine times that much for education alone.

President Arroyo del Rio is trying to boost agricultural production by establishing schools and experiment stations and placing agricultural advisers in various parts of the country. Five per cent of all land taxes are turned back to a semi-official organization of landowners for the purpose of stimulating and improving agriculture. At one experimental farm, seeing a big crowd, I hopped a few clods and went over to see open-mouthed men and women with babies on their backs, all looking at something they had never seen before—a big red tractor breaking the virgin sod in a manner wonderful to behold.

"I find machinery is much cheaper than Indian labor at seven cents a day," declared one *hacendado*. He explained the workers have an old, old custom—racket, the landowners call it. Wheat which falls in the fields while it is being cut is never picked up; it is finders-keepers for the women folks who tag along behind. I saw a group of Indians digging potatoes. Despite the watchful eyes of two bosses on horseback, many potatoes inevitably got "lost" under the dirt and were dug up by



Gleaners and Gleanings. It is finders-keepers for all potatoes that are not picked up when the work crew digs for the big land-owner. These women get about five cents a day, their husbands a little more.

the women who straggled along behind. Every harvesting operation on a big hacienda has its gleaners, with the harvesters themselves being interested parties to the gleaning.

The government is tickled pink to welcome anyone to Ecuador who will settle down and farm the land.³ Possession of land is a badge of aristocracy and about the only form of wealth. Land values are high—as much as \$150 an acre—near the cities where roads make the land accessible. However, I know where you can get 100 acres of land for \$10; the only rub is you may not be able to get to the land after you buy it.

"Capital—lots of it; and people who know how and are willing to work—that's what Ecuador needs," Director of Agriculture Molestina told me. "Agriculture could be expanded almost twenty-fold in the fertile coastal region alone."

Hopes are running high that agriculture *will* be expanded, with Uncle Sam's aid. United States experts, after a thorough

³ U. S. Minister Boaz Long is interested in bringing some U. S. farmers to Ecuador to see what they can do.

survey of the country's potentialities, report that this country could grow many of the crops now obtained outside the American hemisphere—kapok and Manila hemp, tabasco, coconut and palm oils, rubber and quinine, to name a few.

Kapok has never been planted in plantations and would take four to eight years to start. Although Manila hemp is not native to the Americas, growing conditions are similar to its native hangout in the Philippines. Several plants rank high in rotenone, used for insecticides. A United States rubber company, before the war, was negotiating for the establishment of a rubber plantation. And Ecuador is the home of the cinchona tree.

Three hundred years ago, so the cinchona story goes, the Count of Chinchon became stricken with fever in Peru. Doctors despaired of the Viceroy's life until a little package of bark arrived in a roundabout way from an Indian in Ecuador. A potion brewed from the bark miraculously cured the Viceroy of his malaria fever, and the name of the tree promptly became cinchona—although the Indians still call it the "fever tree." That is how the white man discovered quinine.

All of our quinine came from wild "fever trees" in Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia until about 1880. Then the enterprising Dutch planted cinchona in plantations—just as the British were soon to start rubber plantations. Before long the Dutch East Indies acquired a quinine monopoly, and another native American crop was all but banished from the Western Hemisphere. Will cinchona and rubber come home to the Americas? Uncle Sam and his neighbors are betting strongly on it.

Speaking of undeveloped land, the eastern part of Ecuador beyond the mountains merges with the trackless Amazon jungle. Before I had been in Quito 30 minutes, a hotel porter mysteriously beckoned me aside.

"Want to buy a head?" he whispered. "You must buy a head. All *Norteamericanos* buy heads." And from an old can he produced a man's head, the size of an orange.

It was one of the famous shrunken heads of the Jivaros, most famous inhabitants of this jungle portion of Ecuador. After taking the heads of their enemies, these Indians have some kind of process (I didn't have the time to pry into it



Quito Is Capital. And a beautiful city it is, nestled two miles high in the Andes. I took this picture from the highest building in town. My hotel is at the far side of the plaza to the right, and the presidential palace is just across the street.

fully) by which they remove the skull, fill the skin with hot sand and gradually shrink the head to billiard-ball size—retaining the features so the victim is recognizable before and after.

Best customers for these shrunken mementos have been American tourists. So avid have these second-hand "head-hunters" been in their pursuit, they have exhausted the supply of genuine heads, despite governmental regulations against such traffic. In order not to lose this lucrative trade, enterprising Ecuadorians now make fake shrunken heads out of goat skin, passing them off as the real thing to gullible tourists. I bought one.

When I saw the snow-capped peaks of Chimborazo and Cotopaxi, and the checkered fields stretching up the mountainsides, I began to say "*muy linda*" (very beautiful) just like a native, or a president. But scenery is not the only breath-tak-

taking thing in Quito, perched 10,000 feet up on the side of Mt. Pechincha. Walking up a flight of stairs in that altitude is like running a hundred yard dash. Unfortunately, I registered at Hotel Majestic—the other hotel has an elevator.

You need no roosters or alarm clocks to greet the dawn in Quito, a city of 56 churches. Before daylight every morning the insistent clanging of bells begins. My day started by saying "No!" to the hotel barber who dashed down from his fifth floor room promptly at 6 a.m. to say "Clip, señor?" The sixth day I gave in and had one of his 16-cent haircuts.

From my window I could see a cross-section of Ecuador. Across the street was a church, walls plastered with bull fight notices. Inside were Indian mothers saying their prayers, year-old babies standing up to nurse as their mothers knelt. I saw Indians, both men and women, trotting along under tremendous loads supported by a strap across the forehead. Across



Their First Communion. There are 56 churches in Quito and when you hear the bells ring it sounds like at least a thousand. Although most Ecuadorians are Catholics, the religion of many of the Indians is a queer mixture of Christian saints and pagan gods.

the street from my hotel was the presidential palace with a convenient porch to shelter the Indian burden bearers when the daily showers commenced. Sitting on the curb resting was a couple who had walked 10 miles with 80-pound loads of potatoes and corn—they wanted to get to the market early. While they rested, the woman went through her husband's long hair, hunting for crawling things. And I speak from experience when I say they do crawl!

Most fascinating thing to me about the ancient gilded churches are the huge oil paintings. My favorite—favorite, too, of a large number of open-mouthed Indians—was the one of "Hell," or "What Happens to Bad Indians." Old Lucifer held the center of attention, his little devils all around, breathing fire and tormenting the poor sinners. The fellow who drank too much *chicha* was being bitten by a snake. A pig was biting a hunk out of an Adulterer. The Gossiper was losing her tongue, and the Liar had his lips sewed together. The first Spaniards knew how to impress their new converts.

The Majestic Hotel provides room and five-course meals for only \$1.60 a day—a room, mind you, within throwing distance of the presidential palace. I rode on a street car for less than a cent, had an hour's taxi ride for 50 cents, could have an orchid in my buttonhole for a penny. One *Norteamericano* living in Quito has four servants and he pays only \$11 a month for the bunch. That's all right as long as you have Uncle Sam's money, one dollar of which can be exchanged for 15 sucres. Ecuadorians are not so fortunate. An average white collar salary adds up to 40 cents a day, and the president of the republic gets only \$300 a month.

President Arroyo has hopes of being the first president since 1924 to serve his entire term. So much has been written and said about American solidarity that I asked Dr. Arroyo if he would make a special short-wave broadcast to the United States through WLS, the Prairie Farmer station in Chicago.

"When it comes to such a vital issue of Pan-Americanism and American solidarity, I feel it is not only a privilege but a duty for me to speak," the president graciously answered. He made a strong plea for Pan-Americanism, a greater accord be-

tween nations of the Western Hemisphere during this critical period.

"When I think of America, I think not of North, South and Central America, but of *one* America, devoted to the same things, traveling the same course."

The President spoke in Spanish, although he speaks English quite well. "My son says my English is all right for the home, but not for the streets," he smilingly replied to my request that he speak English. His son was schooled in the United States.

This short-wave broadcast was made from Station HCJB, "The Voice of the Andes," which has done and is doing an unheralded but outstanding job at bettering relations between the Americas. Manager Clarence Jones did radio work in Chicago before coming to Quito to establish a world missionary radio station; Chief Engineer Clarence Moore is from Elkhart, Indiana. With English and Spanish programs reaching all corners of the earth, this station, operating on a shoestring, with free-will contributions, is preaching the Gospel, and also the gospel of Pan-Americanism.

"We're trying to put Pan-Americanism in overalls," observed Manager Jones. This radio station is as good a missionary for Uncle Sam as it is for the Lord.

All of which brings up the deluge of Professional Good Neighbors which Uncle Sam has sent out like a flock of pigeons. During 1941 they were flying around South America, seldom getting outside of the city limits, drinking a few cocktails here, shaking a few cultured hands there. They did a great deal of good, but their numbers and all of this attention after years of neglect, has made some of our Latin American neighbors suspicious. As one of our foreign service officials put it:

"With an eye dropper, it's culture. But when it's spread on with a shovel . . . well, you name it."

Ecuador is the land of *mañana*. One day I was planning a 6 o'clock start into the country, so I told the hotel clerk to call me at 5:30 a.m. At 6:30 I woke up and found the clerk still peacefully snoozing downstairs. I wasn't late because my driver who was supposed to come at six came at seven. In company with an agricultural economist I visited a big hacienda, arriving just before noon. Our time was strictly limited, but our host in-

sisted that we first have a swim before I took pictures of the hacienda.

But before the swim, we had coffee. Then we drove five miles away to the swimming pool, only to find it empty. We returned for a 2 p.m. dinner, and having finished that I was anxious to get on with my picture taking. But no, the chauffeur had not had his dinner. We sat and waited another hour while the chauffeur had his corn on the cob. By that time the sun was getting down in the west so we turned around and returned to Quito.

Came the last straw: Two days before I had sent a cable to Chicago to make arrangements for a test broadcast in preparation for President Arroyo's message. I found upon my return to Quito that my cablegram had arrived *after* the time set for the test—pony express would have been almost as quick. That was just one day in Ecuador.

A visit to Ecuador is hectic if you are trying to go places in a hurry; heaven if you want to just live. With all of its poverty and lack of modern trappings, Ecuador is an altogether charming place. If you enjoy beautiful scenery, servants and relaxation, this country is tailor-made for you. All you need is a little money, or to know how to work. There is no nation in the world quite like Ecuador.

Ecuador At A Glance

- Size:* Estimates vary from 120,000 to 337,000 square miles.
People: About 3,200,000; mostly Indian.
Capital: Quito. City is 9,600 feet above sea level. Population, 150,000.
Sells: Cacao, gold and silver, oil, coffee, rice, bananas, tagua, crude rubber.
Buys: Machinery, iron and steel products, cotton goods, flour, chemicals, lard.
Industry: Four-fifths of people depend on agriculture. Foreign capital controls mining. Little manufacturing. Potential resources still undeveloped.

Ecuador's chief problem is making an Ecuadorian out of the Indian who holds to his age-old customs, dress and language.

Oil Greases Venezuela's Way

THE almighty American dollar has less punch in Venezuela than in any other country of the world. In Brazil, for example, I ate a seven-course meal for 30 cents. You can live in comparative luxury in Ecuador on a dollar a day. A choice beefsteak in Buenos Aires can be paid for out of small change. And in China, with one of Uncle Sam's dollars I once paid for a hotel room, three square meals, a haircut, shave, shampoo, massage, and a ride in a rickshaw—and got fifty cents back in change.

But Venezuela! All except the lucky traveller on an expense account, or a philanthropist with money to throw away, had better steer clear of its expensive sights. Eggs are a dollar a dozen; milk is a quarter a quart; shirts are ten dollars each, and a cake of soap sells for eighty cents—your dollars won't last any longer than snowballs in this hot country on the northern coast of South America.

There are many reasons for this high cost of living but the main one is oil. Venezuela ranks third in world production of this liquid power which drives autos, planes and industrial machinery. Because this nation has little use for its power, she sells most of it—in fact, Venezuela is the world's biggest exporter of petroleum. (United States ranks first in oil production, the Soviet Union is second. They both use most of their production.)

When Alonso de Ojeda visited this section of South America in 1499, he found Indians living in stilt huts on Lake Maracaibo. So he called the land Venezuela—Little Venice. He was disappointed because he was looking for El Dorado, the land of gold which was reputed to exist in South America.

History has an ironic way of showing up these short-sighted explorers. Three centuries later a new kind of foreign

conquistador made the basin of Maracaibo synonymous in oil circles with El Dorado. Black gold gushed wherever the earth's crust was dented, and the richest oil deposit ever discovered has been pouring oil to the engines of the world and dollars into the Venezuelan treasury since 1920. In that year, Venezuela produced only a half million barrels of oil. By 1939, the output had skyrocketed to 206 million barrels.

The city of Maracaibo has mushroomed from a swampy village to a modern city of 110,000, of which 30,000 are white foreigners. This gives you some idea of who is behind the derricks. Foreign capital, dominated by companies in the United States, Britain, and the Netherlands, controls most of the production.

From Lake Maracaibo the oil is moved in shallow draft tankers down the river and over to the Dutch islands of Aruba and Curacao, where most of it is refined and re-exported. Water and oil may not mix, but there's plenty of oil on the waters of Lake Maracaibo. This is bad medicine for the mosquitoes but it is also a fire hazard. In 1939, the lake literally caught fire and destroyed several villages with a great loss of life.

What has oil meant to Venezuela? The entries should be made on both sides of the ledger. About twenty cents of each oil dollar goes to the government. The national treasury, which had four times the income in 1930 that it did in 1914, was about the only one in the world that was still in the black at the end of the depression. There are no property taxes, no income taxes in Venezuela. Oil pays the bill.

But that's not the whole story. Oil, believe sober judges, has retarded the general development of the vast untouched resources of Venezuela. Oil has made the government wealthy while the vast majority of Venezuelans are poor, illiterate, and ill-fed. Oil supports the government, but the soil, which supports the people, has been neglected.

Although Venezuelan wages and salaries are the highest in Latin America, few get rich because of the high cost of living. For example, an agricultural worker cannot buy a cake of soap with a day's work. Old-time Republicans must have borrowed their tariff ideas from Venezuela. Before our trade

agreement was signed with Venezuela in 1938, the duty alone on a pound of wheat flour was 5.7 cents. Duty on a pound of lard was 17.2 cents. Other tariffs, correspondingly high, send most prices up to prohibitive levels. Practically all manufactured products must be imported; this nation even imports much of its food.

To find the reason for that, we'd better explore this country which would make half a dozen states the size of Illinois. There are about 3½ million people in Venezuela, a rough guess. It's hard to get an exact census since the boundaries of this country run, for the most part, through unsettled, and even unexplored territory. The people are largely a mixture of Indian, Negro, and European—mulattos, zambos and mestizos, and combinations of the three. Not two out of a hundred are pure white. Four out of five Venezuelans can neither read a newspaper nor sign their names. And, despite the fact that most of them make their living from the soil, malnourishment is most common—it has been said that they eat only one-fourth as much as healthy European immigrants.

This country is divided into four geographical sections. One is the swampy, heat-ridden Maracaibo basin which flows with oil. Most important section of the country is the Northern Highlands, an extension of the Andes mountains. Although this narrow strip comprises only about one-sixth of the country, here is the economic heart of the nation, the chief cities, the leading industries (except oil), and the main agriculture. Farther east are the great cattle plains of the Orinoco valley. And on beyond is the deserted eastern half of Venezuela, the Guinea Highlands.

Agriculture can be divided into two types: crops raised for sale, such as coffee, cacao, and sugar; and crops raised to be eaten on the spot. Coffee is the main commercial crop of Venezuela. It is a high grade, mild coffee that grows on the mountain slopes at altitudes of from 2,000 to 6,000 feet. Most of it comes from large plantations, although considerable quantities are now being grown on small farms. The coffee business isn't what it used to be. In 1929, Venezuela exported 142 million pounds. In 1938, this had fallen to 79 million pounds, only 3 per cent of the exports.



Coffee Is Mild and Good. Coffee is Venezuela's main commercial crop but exports are falling off. The best coffee grows on mountain slopes between 2,000 and 6,000 feet above sea level.

Cacao beans, raised for the most part on the plantations of absentee landlords, is the second most important export crop. The 1938 production was only 45 million pounds, one per cent of the exports.

But from the standpoint of all-around production and acreage, most important is the "patch" cultivation which produces the corn, beans, rice, manioc and bananas—food for three-fourths of the people in Venezuela. Corn occupies more acres than any other single crop, but don't expect to see the long rows of the Corn Belt. The Venezuelan farmer has a patch here and a patch there which he scratches with a wooden plow and plants by hand.

Crops in Venezuela are planted by altitudes. At the lower elevations, where it is usually hot and sticky, you find bananas, cacao, and corn. Half way up the mountain side...

best. At higher elevations, you find grains which do better in temperate climates, and then on up are grazing lands.

Most livestock is found in the Llanos which got its start in the cattle business when the Spaniards imported stock in the early 1500's. At one time it was estimated that eight million cattle roamed the plains along the Orinoco river much like the buffalo of our pioneer days.

If good pasture were available, 50 million cattle could graze and furnish wealth in this third of Venezuela. As it is, the three million cattle which pick the wild grasses in the Llanos are half-starved. It rains from April to October, the river overflows, and the cattle wade for higher land. Many times, they will munch all the grass above water on one island, then wade on to the next. When the sun comes out, it quickly burns to a crisp the high grasses that were nurtured by rain. And receding water leaves swamps and ponds which breed hosts of mosquitoes and other insects to plague the poor cattle even more.

The cards are stacked against these cattle raisers at present, but they plug along in the only way of life they know. Experts say that seeded pastures, disease control, irrigation, and wells would improve the livestock. Zebu bulls have been imported to cross with the native stock. But transportation remains the biggest problem. There is no railroad connecting this vast territory with the nerve center of the country. And roads dwindle off into donkey paths. To reach the markets in the plateau, cattle have to hoof it several hundred miles.

If having a highly developed transportation system means maturity, Venezuela is just beginning to toddle. Railroad mileage totals only 600 miles. Highways are not much longer, although a paved road to Colombia is one of the prides of the country. But Venezuela will never be developed, will never have a real national consciousness, until it is linked by transportation routes.

For example: The Guinea Highlands, composing one-half of the country, is empty and almost totally isolated from the western part. There is less connection between these two sections of Venezuela than between Illinois and the Island of Oahu. Not that the Guinea Highlands are wasteland. This

is a region of gold and diamonds and tremendous deposits of rich iron ore. From the dense forests which cover its rugged terrain come such products as balata, a rubber-like substance used for golf ball covers; the tonka bean, used as a perfume base, and chicle, the raw material for chewing gum.

But there are fewer people living in this area per square mile than in practically any section of Latin America. Estimates say there's one person for about every 2,500 acres. A United States steel corporation has a concession there but as yet no ore is being worked.

That brings up the question of manufacturing and mineral resources. Venezuela is one of the few Latin American countries that can boast iron ore, coal and oil in sizable quantities. But for all the good that her coal and iron ore are doing her today, Venezuela might as well not have them. One reason for high tariffs was to encourage local industry. But the biggest industry in the country is that of making cotton goods, and these mills supply one-half the local needs. Second biggest is the cigarette industry. Venezuela has the makings of industry, if she can get her fuel and ore together and develop the know-how to make things which her people can afford to buy.

Two native-born sons stand out above all others in Venezuela, Bolívar and Gomez, although liberals say it is almost sacrilegious to mention them in the same breath.

First Simon Bolívar, the George Washington of South America. Born in Caracas in 1783, he was only 22 years old when he took his famous vow, "I will not give rest to my arm or my soul till I have broken the chains that bind my fatherland to Spain." Five years later, he started to do something about it. For 14 years, in which he and his small army had their ups and downs, he fought the Spaniards until he had liberated Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia.

Bolívar was a great idealist. He had the first idea for a United States of South America. He realized what hemispherical solidarity was all about when he called a conference of American states in Panama in 1826. But he lived before his time. It must have been a tremendous jolt to see his native Venezuela and Ecuador secede from Colombia in 1830. He died

when he was 47 years old, an exile in Colombia. But his vision and his faith are still at work throughout Latin America.

The other big name in Venezuela's history is that of Juan Vicente Gomez. Two people seldom agree as to whether Gomez was good or bad medicine for Venezuela. First of all he was a 24-karat dictator who ran Venezuela from 1909 to 1935 as if it were his own private estate. This illegitimate son of an Indian mother and a Spanish father did establish order in a nation whose 80 years of independence had produced 50 revolutions and a score of constitutions. He increased its outward prosperity by making it easy for foreign capital to come in and develop the country. Oil royalties kept the government coffers full. Even Yankee business men will tell you that Venezuela is the "best-run country in Latin America." Others add, "Yes, for Yankee business men."

You hear that Gomez brought order and prosperity to Venezuela. You also hear of thousands of political prisoners who were permanently crippled by leg irons. You hear of students hung with meat hooks through their throats as a warning to others who might dare speak out for freedom. Gomez was not married, but conservative estimates have him the father of at least 90 children.

He owned coffee and sugar plantations. He controlled most of the pastures in the highlands where cattle, driven from the Llanos, were fattened. It is said he put a tax on moving cattle from one state to another. In that way he froze out foreign competition with high taxes. He paid taxes on his own cattle, but since the national treasury was synonymous with his own bank account, this merely involved transferring funds from one pocket to another. It is estimated he left nearly 200 million dollars when he died in 1935. His property was promptly confiscated, many of his children exiled. Gomez made his government rich, but he did not make his people less poor.

So after twenty-five years of this absolute dictatorship, Venezuela only now is trying to live up to the democratic government she styles herself to be. Venezuela has the makings of a great and powerful nation. She will be, once her people are given the opportunity of helping build it.

Venezuela At A Glance

- Size:* 352,170 square miles. Large sections unoccupied.
- People:* 3½ million. Largely mestizo, mulatto, and zambo, combinations of white, Negro, and Indian.
- Capital:* Caracas is modern city. Population, 203,000.
- Sells:* Petroleum is chief export, more than 90% of total. Coffee, cacao, gold, hides, and skins.
- Buys:* Machinery, iron and steel products, foodstuffs, manufactured goods of all kinds.
- Industry:* Petroleum industry pays the expenses of government. Bulk of population make living from land. Venezuela has coal, oil and iron, but does little manufacturing.

Venezuela has considerable potentialities. If she can whip her transportation problems, develop her lands, and bring her fuel and iron ore together, she may be a manufacturing nation of some note. Her people are illiterate and need to be brought into the scheme of government.

Colombia, Gem of Democracy

COLOMBIA is our nearest South American neighbor. It is a nation where orchids grow wild and prosperity depends on coffee—a nation whose isolated capital oozes culture, and whose land is only one-third occupied.

Talk about mean geography; Colombia has it. Mountains and jungles have handed her a couple of body blows that would have knocked out a less aggressive people. Yet Colombia happens to be one of the most progressive and democratic countries in Latin America, a firm friend of the United States. Ideally situated for trade, Colombia promises to develop into a vital partner of Uncle Sam—she will supply us with increasing quantities of tropical goods, and she will buy an expanding volume of our products.

This republic, no mere form word in Colombia's case, is perched atop the South American continent where it narrows abruptly into the Isthmus of Panama. Although set down on the equator, the make-up of the country varies from fever-infested jungles to snow-capped mountains. The eastern part—an area six times the size of New York—is empty; its dense jungle and open plains are isolated from the rest of the country. The Caribbean and Pacific coastal plains are unattractive to settlers because of the steaming climate.

Most of the nine million people live in the highland heart of Colombia where the Andes fan out like three giant fingers, with the fertile Cauca and Magdalena river valleys in between. In this section, where you can get a change of climate by moving up or down the mountainside, Spanish blood has intermingled with Indian¹ to form an aggressive Colombian—and a liberty-loving democrat.

¹ Estimates of racial composition vary: About one-half are mestizoes; Negro or mulatto, 25%; white, 15%; and Indian, 10%.



Oxen Help Build Roads. Transportation, or lack of it, is Colombia's biggest problem. However, this road-building scene is symbolic of the changes stirring the country. Planes have opened up Colombia but more people travel by burro.

"Orville Wright must have had Colombia in mind when he invented the airplane," commented the captain of our Panagra plane on the flight from Ecuador to Colombia. Looking at the wrinkled lands beneath, I could see why planes have been magic for this country; it wasn't just happen-so that the world's first commercial airline got its start here in 1919.²

Three hours after the pilot gunned our plane for the take-off from Quito (planes have a tough time taking off and landing in thin air of high altitudes), we were in Cali; no road nor railroads connects these cities. From Cali I flew to Bogotá, the capital; these cities are not connected all of the way by either road or railroad. Later, I flew from Cali to the Panama Canal

² This Scadta airline was German. Because the Panama Canal was in easy flying distance, United States encouraged the Colombians to take over the airline. It is now called Avianca.

Zone. Not only are there no roads or railroads connecting Colombia with neighboring Panama, this stretch has even the donkey stopped.

Airlines link Colombia's four biggest cities—Bogotá, Medellín, Barranquilla and Cali—but at this writing it is impossible to go directly by water, road or railroad between any of the four. Rather it is a question of piecing together autos, trains, boats, and donkeys for the proper combination; in some sections you even travel by cable car. Planes make these trips easily, but to see and know Colombia, you must stay on the ground and take your chances. If you want to be sure of reaching your destination, place your bets on the lowly burro.

Colombia's climate is measured in feet up and down, I learned on a trip through the Colombian highlands. In the Cauca Valley around Cali, it is tropical; farmers raise sugar cane, run around in shirt sleeves or no shirt at all. Half way up the mountainside where it is spring the year around they raise "the best coffee in the world." Farther up on the moun-



Blindfolded Burros Stand Patiently. Burros won't shy at something they can't see is the theory behind the blindfold. These burros carry two, 132-pound sacks of coffee. Care must be taken in loading or the burro will "turn turtle".

tain plateau, they grow temperate zone crops and sit by the fireplace, if they have one.

To know a country, get beyond the city limits; to know the people, ride third class on the train.³ Colombian trains have first and second class accommodations, but the common people and I rode third. The main difference, I soon found, was the windows—they had no glass in them; the seats—they weren't padded; and the baggage—no small part of it was chickens and other livestock. Then, too, I was a bit conspicuous with my shoes on. Although third class passengers are not allowed in the diner, I did not go hungry.

At every station a third of the village descended on our train, hawking offerings of bananas, soup, pineapples and flowers through the open windows. One village even specialized in whole boiled chickens wrapped in banana leaves. No leisurely meal this, we gulped our soup and poured down the drinks so we could throw the dishes out of the windows as the engines puffed out of the station. They were distrustful of this honor system at one stop, and woe unto those who were only half-finished with their soup. At the locomotive's first lunge, a youngster dashed through our car unceremoniously grabbing all cups and dishes. And he didn't jump off the train until he had rounded up every last one of the village's utensils.

I got off at a tiny village where our train stopped to load coffee. (Perhaps it was so the engineer could shave—he hung a cracked mirror on the side of his puffing giant, and calmly cut off his whiskers, using hot water from the boiler.) I had to watch my step; on straw mats all around the village coffee beans were spread out to dry. Blindfolded donkeys stood patiently as heavy sacks were transferred from their backs to the train.

Coffee makes up two-thirds of Colombia's exports, and her financial thermometer goes up and down with the price of coffee. This crop is a meal ticket for a quarter of the popula-

³ My most memorable third-class train ride was a 36-hour pull from Manchuria into China, just a month before the Japanese-Chinese war started. It was so crowded, Chinese slept in the aisles and baggage racks. I've never forgiven the Japanese railway guards kicking around as so much swine these kindly Chinese who shared their boiled eggs with me.

tion, Colombia ranking second only to Brazil in world production of America's favorite breakfast beverage.

It was coffee picking time when I arrived; men, women and children were busy in the thicket-covered mountainsides. With fiber baskets tied to their waists, pickers work with both hands, picking (not stripping as they do in Brazil) the cherry-sized berries from the bushes. Coffee trees are pruned to the height of a man and shaded by banana plants and large trees. "The coffee must have a *sombrero* so it will ripen evenly," I was told.

At lunch time, they unwrap banana leaves and take out their rice and boiled bananas (really plantains, a cousin to the banana that must be cooked), washing down the food with



Picking Coffee. The red berries are picked when they get red. Pickers tie their baskets to their waists, and pick (not strip) the berries from the bushes. Colombian coffee is famous for flavor.



Human Truckers. After the berries are picked they're sacked and carried, sometimes several miles, to the processing plant where the outer pulp is removed and the beans allowed to ferment. Fermentation adds to the flavor.

water from a big gourd. When the pickers have filled big sacks with the red berries, they shoulder their loads and trudge over steep mountain paths to the processing plant. Here the pulp is removed and, to improve the flavor, the coffee beans are allowed to ferment a short time. Then the beans are washed clean and spread out to dry. Barefoot boys with long rakes, one eye on the lookout for approaching thunderstorms, keep turning the beans so they will dry more evenly.

Colombian coffee commands a higher price in the world market than the Brazilian variety because of its mild flavor; it is used in the United States to blend with the stronger Brazilian coffee. Both the government and the National Federation of Coffee Growers cooperate in jealously preserving their reputation for producing what they say is "the best coffee in the world."⁴ Only the top quality beans are exported.

⁴ Costa Rica, Salvador, Haiti and Guatemala will probably challenge this statement—they grow fine mild coffees, too.

"We drink the dregs at home," sighed a Colombian friend, when I made a face over my cup of coffee. "Please don't judge our coffee by what you drink here in Colombia!"

Because much coffee formerly went to Europe, war clouds cast depression shadows over this country when markets were completely cut off. What looked like disaster was averted only by Uncle Sam's timely adoption of the Inter-American Coffee Agreement by which the United States agreed to take so much coffee from each of the 15 coffee-producing countries in Latin America. Colombia was well pleased with her quota of 3,150,000 bags;⁵ her production is a little more than four million bags.

Coffee has been called the economic salvation of this mountainous country. It grows on steep slopes where nothing else could grow. Few tools or equipment are needed and barefoot-labor at 50 cents a day is plentiful. Coffee farms are family-operated; the average is only six acres. Moreover, coffee is a commodity which can be moved leisurely without spoiling; sometimes it takes as much as three months to get a sack of coffee out of the mountains and down to port.

It is doubtful if we get a cup of Colombian coffee which at some time hasn't been taken for a ride on a donkey. In this particular region there are no roads, only donkey paths reaching out from the railroad to the coffee *fincas* (farms). Load for one of these small donkeys is a couple of 132-pound sacks. It's an art to load a donkey. Both sacks must be put on at the same time, and properly balanced; otherwise the donkey might turn turtle.

My guide around this region was Manuel. He was transferring sacks of coffee from donkey to train when I offered him 75 cents a day to show me the surrounding country. He laid down the sack and we promptly set out in search of "acres and acres of wild orchids," another noted crop of Colombia.

"Mucho! Mucho!" Manuel replied when I asked if he knew where any orchids grew; we started "just down the hill." Now in any Andean country "just down the hill" can be a heck of a long way; I found that out after five miles of rough walking

⁵ In 1941, United States bought 99.9% of Colombia's coffee.



Drying the Coffee. After fermenting, the beans are thoroughly washed and spread out in the sun to dry. This barefooted chap rakes the coffee to see that the beans dry more evenly. And he keeps a weather eye open for approaching showers so he can cover the precious coffee.

over a path lined with coffee bushes, bananas and palm-thatched huts. On the way I quizzed Manuel and learned he had a wife and two children, but surprisingly enough, wasn't married. That is a formality many never go through because of the expense.

As we approached some big machinery installations of a coffee plant, I took some pictures, only to find myself surrounded almost immediately by mechanics from the plant. They took one look at my blonde hair and camera and asked Manuel, "Alemán?" Unfortunately, Manuel nodded. The men

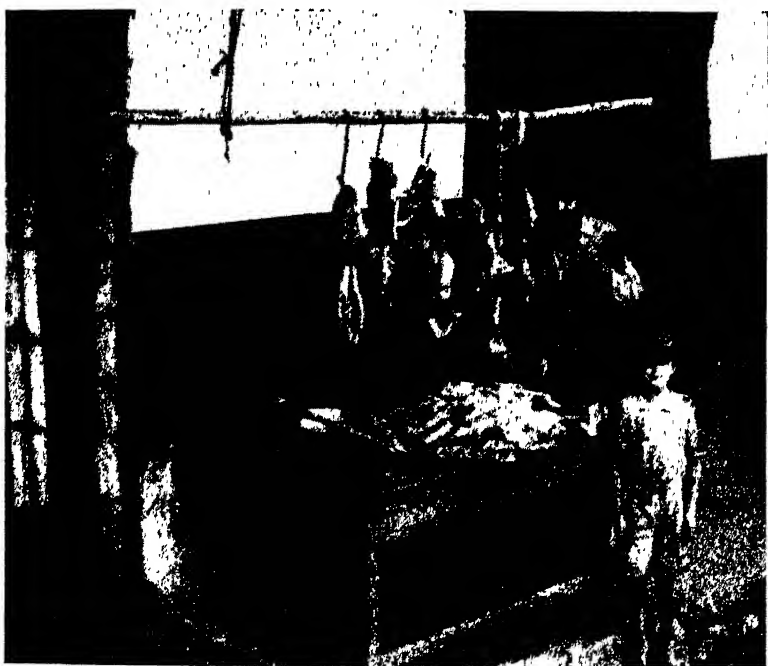
all gathered closer—it's a good thing I knew enough Spanish to set them right. "Alemán" is Spanish for "German."

We finally reached the valley where the orchids grew in profusion. The only thing Manuel had neglected to mention was that they wouldn't bloom for a month yet.

A Colombian friend had a sad experience with orchids in the United States. When he was in New York he mentioned to his American girl friend that in Colombia he picked orchids as casually as we pick sweet peas. When she expressed interest, he said he'd send her "a bunch" to wear that evening.

"When I got that bill for \$55, I thought it might have been cheaper to take the girl back to my country and let her pick her own orchids," he explained.

Although agriculture is the mainstay of the country, there is no such thing as a typical farm. They range from half acre



Open Air Meat Market. The grocery store of Colombia, and many other Latin American countries, is the village market where folks bring their produce to sell and exchange. This is the meat counter, out where the flies can get to the meat. Because of lack of refrigeration, meat must be eaten the day after the livestock is killed.

patches on steep mountainsides to fifty thousand acre haciendas in the valleys. And they raise everything from bananas for Uncle Sam to bulls for the bull ring. Colombia has an increasing number of small farm owners who love their 25 acres so much they would not trade them for an emerald mine.

"Why should I sell my farm, if I'm making a living here?" the small landowner asks with irrefutable logic.

Home of the small farmer, or farm laborer, is a rather sorry mixture of mud bricks with thatched roof and dirt floors. Cooking is done over an open fire and the manner in which smoke seeps out through the straw roof always called to mind our smokehouse at home. Even the big estates have what they call their "black kitchen" where the smoke is so thick that the cooks must test by feel or taste—certainly not by sight.

The grocery store of Colombia is an open air market where the simple needs of the people are filled by purchase and barter. Meat, cut in long strips, stomach and intestines included, hangs outside the shop so the customer can get a better look at it. (Frequently he has to shoo off the flies to tell what kind of meat he is getting.) Down by the stream where the women were scrubbing clothes and washing babies, I saw the town butcher's two sons deftly cut up a steer. Their dogs scared away the buzzards which crowded in close. There is practically no refrigeration in the rural areas.

Those who shop for recognized brands would have a difficult time at the market; they have vegetables and fruits I had never seen before. Although I saw no candy they do have *panela*, unrefined brown sugar wrapped in banana leaves. Colombians eat 15 times as much *panela* as granulated sugar; refined sugar is too expensive, and besides it is not as healthful, these rural folks told me.

And such strange fruits! At a Bogotá hotel I selected a pinkish fruit from a dish, broke it open and started eating the large kernel. Although it tasted rather strange, I thought perhaps it was something one had to learn to like. I kept gnawing away until my waiter embarrassedly explained, "Señor, you are eating the seed."

Corn, not coffee, is Colombia's most important crop from the standpoint of acreage. Together with beans and rice, it



Corn Is Most Important Food Crop. In Colombia, as in the majority of the Latin American countries, corn is the most important single food crop. Most popular corn dish is the tortilla. To make tortillas, the housewife soaks corn overnight in limewater to remove the skins. Then she crushes it, as this girl is doing, between two stones, patties the dough into pancakes, and bakes them.

forms the basis for the common man's diet. In the low altitudes, corn yields two crops annually. Near Bogotá, at an altitude of 8,000 feet, farmers plant their corn in February and husk it in December. Prices fluctuate violently. Corn may be 45 cents a bushel in one village, while 100 miles away it might sell for \$2, all because of the bogey of inadequate transportation. Since wheat sells for as high as \$2.50 a bushel, many people substitute plantains for bread. A rural laborer must work a week to buy a bushel of wheat; plantains grow in his backyard.

How Argentine farmers would gloat at these sky-high grain prices! One reason for them is the crude methods of production. Corn is planted by hand in furrows laid out by wooden plows. Or if it's a hillside, the farmer may use a sharpened stick to jab a hole for his seed corn. And even for \$2.50 a bushel, I doubt if Kansas wheat farmers would go back to cutting wheat with a sickle and threshing it with mules, the way many Colombians do.

"Agriculture is what we call the backbone of our country," one official reflected, "but paradoxically our country does not grow enough crops for our own use." In 1939 Colombia imported more than \$16,000,000 worth of corn, cotton, wheat, cattle, lard, sugar and cocoa. He listed reasons why these items were not grown at home: "Colombia has the potential farm and grazing lands but many of these areas have no roads to market. Inefficient production methods are general. We must import all of our fertilizer, and it costs twice as much as it should. We could grow a great deal more cotton and sugar cane, but we need irrigation works."

Less than two per cent of the entire country is now under cultivation. For instance, the eastern two-thirds of this country is empty, as far as people are concerned. Out of 175 *million* acres, only 30 *thousand* are now cultivated. Brazil has no monopoly on Amazonian jungle; Colombia's share spreads over much of this region. Savage Indians living here are seldom molested, except when someone gets the idea there might be oil in "them thar jungles." I read a newspaper report of prospectors being ambushed with Indian arrows, dipped in poison. Oil has been discovered and fortunes in mahogany, balsam, medi-

cinal shrubs and waxes are waiting for roads and railroads to carry them out.

This jungle gives way in the north to vast open plains where some day millions of cattle may graze. Only a feeble cattle industry is here now. Cattle do well, but cowboys cannot eat all of the beef, nor can they get it to market without roads. So a great portion of Colombia is waiting for transportation—has been waiting for 400 years.

Then there are the coastal regions. "It's a wonder these Negroes don't sprout fins—it rains so much," declared a native of the Pacific coast where it rains almost continuously. Only Negroes can and will work in this hot, malarial climate, and they stir themselves and the earth no more than to make a living. That is not too hard. Bananas grow in the backyard; corn and mandioca, too, if the natives hack away a few weeds with their machetes. Modesty is the only reason for clothes, and palm trees and vaulting poles (bamboo, you know) furnish all the building materials necessary to put up a house.

Another steaming lowland is found along the Caribbean coast where the big banana plantations of the United Fruit Company are centered.⁶ Experts predict the great potential wealth of these coastal regions and interior forests and plains—nearly two-thirds of the country—will be tapped some day "when we have roads." Unfortunately, much of this area is hot lowlands where white men think more of keeping cool than doing work.

Prior to 1930, this is what Colombia was like, according to one authority.⁷ "Five million agricultural workers with a daily wage of 15 centavos and two million urban workers with daily wages of 40 centavos were economically not far removed from a tribe of cave dwellers who had to limit their commercial activities to the exchange of a basket of potatoes for a pound of salt, or a bundle of faggots for a pair of sandals."

⁶ Colombia is the fourth biggest banana exporter in the world. Small farmers now produce three-fifths of them, while the United Fruit Company produces the rest. This company owns the railroads and ships and buys from the small producers.

⁷ Progress and Problems of Colombian Industry by Jorge Zalamea in *"Bulletin of the Pan American Union,"* August, 1941.



Rural Housing Project. The government, recognizing that most rural people live in miserable hovels, has set up a program whereby farmers can move into a new house like the one on the left. These houses cost from \$300 to \$600 and are paid for over a term of 30 years.

That brings us up to Colombia's government of the past twelve years, the "New Deal," Colombians proudly call it. That government has undertaken an almost revolutionary program of internal development designed to promote agriculture, increase home industry, and unify the country with adequate communications.

To stimulate home-grown produce, the government has slapped on high tariffs that would make an old-time Republican gasp. Import duty on corn is \$1.45 a bushel; on wheat, \$1.24; on sugar, 5 cents a pound; cotton, 2½ cents a pound. If there is a shortage of any of these items, the government steps in and imports the needed amount.

A rural housing program is just getting under way. By raising two extra hogs a year, farmers can afford to move from their present miserable hovels into comfortable stone and tile-roofed houses. These houses, costing from \$300 to \$600, are sold to farmers on a 30-year payment basis. I saw one happy family of six paying for their new house at the rate

of \$1.39 a month. The government hopes to build 2,000 such homes annually. That isn't many, but it is a start.

The government made another big hit by buying up big estates, dividing and selling them on easy terms to the farmers. A recent law, too, provides that any family living for 30 years on land to which someone else does not have clear title, can claim the land for its own. Other projects have included importation of purebred livestock and extension of credit for agricultural production, seed and implements.

"I have just bought those cattle with a government loan," a *hacendado* in the Cauca Valley told me. "I only have to pay 7½ per cent interest. Formerly for such a loan, I paid two per cent monthly."

Farm machinery, although double the price U. S. farmers pay for it, is making its bid, particularly tractors and small threshers. One landowner gleefully told me how much more profit he is making on corn and wheat since he shifted to power



Science Takes a Hand. Colombia recognizes that her agriculture is her biggest asset. She now plans a soil survey of the entire country to determine what to plant and where to plant it.

machinery. However, it is not a simple matter of buying machinery; workmen have to be sold on the idea of using it.

"When we first bought tractors, our men could scarcely be coaxed away from their oxen," a sugar plantation manager related. "It took a year to convince them that the tractor was better than the wooden plow. But you couldn't get them back to driving ox teams now."

What promises to be a most far-reaching undertaking has just been started—a soil survey of the entire country. The department of agriculture, the treasury (looking for land revenues), and the army air service are cooperating in making this soil map, using methods developed in the United States. Exchange of information on tropical soils should be mutually valuable to both countries.

"When this soil map is finished, we will have the information and a sound basis on which to build. We plan then to establish an organization of farm advisers, advising farmers what to plant and where to plant it," declared the head of the government chemical laboratory.

Colombia is proud of her growing industry, primarily based on processing the products of agriculture and stockraising; it has helped tide the nation over some rough spots stirred up by the war. However, half of the raw materials for this industry are now imported, although many could be produced within the country. This country has two problems: Producing those raw materials suited to her climate; and producing them at low cost. Colombia can import some of these raw materials cheaper than she can raise them. (Of course, we must not forget that tariffs gave U. S. industry its start.)

Colombian minerals run to the flashy side. She mined \$20,000,000 worth of gold in 1939 and is the chief world producer of platinum and emeralds.⁸ Although she has some coal and iron, they are inaccessible without roads. One steadily growing source of wealth is oil, now making up one-fourth of the country's exports. Oil prospectors are even invading the home

⁸ Most of the emeralds mined today come from Colombia. Emeralds are more valuable than diamonds. A curious fact, valuable emerald mines only 75 miles from Bogota became lost for a hundred years in overgrown jungles. They were re-discovered only 30 years ago.

stamping grounds of savage Indians—what the Spaniards did for gold, modern prospectors are doing for oil. Most of Uncle Sam's \$225,000,000 investment is in the oil and mining industries.

Not the least accomplishment to which the government points with pride is the boosting of wages. Before 1930, labor in rural areas received 15 cents a day; now they get 35 to 50 cents. Urban workers, who averaged only 40 cents daily before 1930, now receive \$233 a year. (High tariffs have pushed up the price of corn, beans and rice, so their wages really do not buy much more.)

Finally, the transportation bogey is being tackled. And when highways and railroads replace the donkey, then you can be assured Colombia will be on the road to a bright future.

One thing isolation has done is to develop a mountaineering individuality among Colombians who would never bow to a mere dictator. After two dozen revolutions during the first years of her existence as an independent nation, Colombia hit the sawdust trail of democracy and has been a model for 35 years. People vote, and the votes are counted in Colombia.

Bogotá is one capital in South America where people can say or print what they think of the government without fear of landing in the calaboose. It has been labeled the Athens of the Americas because of its attitude towards free speech, free press, and its over-all intellectual atmosphere. Even a ragged barefoot boy recited a poem he had written, as he shined my shoes with an orange peel. They are proud of their culture—another good reason why Uncle Sam should think twice before sending out missionaries to carry a U. S. A. brand of culture to Latin American countries; many of them believe we are the ones who need civilizing.

"What do the people of Colombia think of Uncle Sam?" I asked a big landowner.

"The feeling is divided," was the answer. "Many feel that since Colombia depends economically on the United States it is to our interest to cooperate with her and follow her lead in foreign policy. Others look with suspicion upon your profession of friendship. They remember the Uncle Sam with the Big Stick and the Panama episode."



A Good Long Drink. These coffee plantation workers drink a fermented beverage made from corn. They take it straight from their gourd jug, and seem to be enjoying the taste.

(Panama, prior to 1903, was a part of Colombia. The United States had tried to get a canal concession from Colombia, but was refused. Panama then rebelled against Colombia, and set up her own government. Within a space of hours President Teddy Roosevelt recognized Panama as a sovereign nation, secured a Panama Canal concession, warned Colombia and guaranteed Panamanian independence. Fast work!)

"These people think your country is just being nice to us because the United States is what you call 'in a fix,' and that when the war is over, you will promptly forget South America as you did after the last war," he explained.

On the whole, Colombians are extremely friendly to the United States. Geographically we are fairly close neighbors. Economies of the two countries are complementary: In 1940, Uncle Sam bought most of Colombia's coffee and bananas, and sold her 71 per cent of her needs, mainly machinery and manufactured goods. Strategically, Colombia is invaluable in the Panama Canal defense. Politically, Colombia has her own New

Deal. In Bogotá's exclusive Jockey Club, I heard President Franklin Delano Roosevelt called "the greatest man in the world—only you Americans don't realize it."

Colombia is a country we must know better.

After completing a 13,500-mile jaunt through the countries of this continent, I find Colombia in many respects a fitting summary of South America. Mountains and jungles, crops and culture, history and peoples—this country has a dash of many things that make up the South American republics. (Revolutions are a possible exception—Colombia hasn't had one for 35 years.)

Transportation, for instance: I've traveled by plane, boat, auto, bus, train, horse, oxcart and donkey around South America. And the donkey covers more ground than the plane in Colombia. Impenetrable jungles and four-mile-high mountains make road and railroad building a heroic task. To get from one country to another on this continent you must frequently go by mule-back—or fly. Colombia borders five countries, yet Bogotá has no rail connections with any of these countries; and highways reach only two.

The great Amazonian jungle laps over into six countries: Colombia is one-third jungle, and some of the Indians shoot to kill. Many regions of the continent have too much rain—some not enough. Colombia gets too much rain in certain sections, and she has her irrigation problems also.

Dominating the entire continent are the tremendous Andes, which throw up barriers three and four miles high, isolating many countries and sections within countries. In Colombia, the Andes have so divided the country that Colombian Jorge Zalarnea wrote: "No longer ago than 1925, the country was composed of fourteen diminutive countries with no economic bonds between them."

But again, the higher altitudes of these mountains provide temperate zones within the tropics where white men can live and work. In Colombia, the majority of the people live in one-fourth of the country—the highlands.

South America, with one-seventh of the land, has only one-thirtieth of the world's population. Huge areas of potentially productive land are totally undeveloped because of unfavorable

climate, lack of transportation, capital and men who can and will work. Less than two per cent of Colombia is actually under cultivation; this country would make a dozen states the size of Ohio, but it has only nine million people.

With the exception of Brazil, few of these countries have iron and coal, the sinews of industry. The people depend quite largely on agriculture and stock raising. Colombia's iron and coal are undeveloped; agriculture is her main industry.

In South America the distance between rich and poor is vast; upper class women are carefully sheltered and chaperoned. Colombia is much more liberal in government, not so liberal with her women.

Prior to 1810, these South American countries were ruled by Spain (Brazil by Portugal) and forbidden to trade with one another. They were dominated by an absentee landlord who was more interested in gold, glory and gospel than the agriculture which is the very foundation of these countries today. Led by San Martín and Bolívar, these countries threw off the yoke in revolutions from 1810-20. Colombia fought shoulder to shoulder with other peoples for the freedom and independence they all wanted.

The strongly Catholic white population of South America comes from Spain and southern Europe, dominates the governments of these countries, and usually looks upon manual labor as something for Indians and Negroes. Indians are found in the highland areas doing this work. And Negroes are found in the hot lowlands, where muggy climate makes the white man unwilling to live. Colombian population is made up of these three racial groups.

When one thinks of South American crops, one thinks of coffee, cacao, cotton, corn, beef and rubber. Colombia produces them all. For diversion the South American has his cock fights, bull fights and national lotteries; and each has its special niche in Colombia.

Uncle Sam, the best customer and salesman in most of these countries, has increased his trade with Latin America during the two years of the war. The United States furnished 49.9 per cent of Colombia's imports in 1938, 54 per cent in 1939, and 71.4 per cent in 1940. Colombia, like the majority of

the other countries, also leans towards the United States' foreign policy, and applauds the Good Neighbor attitude we've taken.

South America is a continent of frontiers, of great potentialities and undeveloped resources—full of nations 400 years old, but just beginning to “go West” in agriculture. The development today within Colombia—the road building, internal improvements, increased attention to agriculture and research—is an example of what is stirring every country in South America today.

South America is a continent the world is going to hear more from. Colombia will help lead that procession of progress.

Colombia At A Glance

Size: 448,794 square miles.

People: About 9 million. One-half mestizo; Negro or mulatto, 25%; white, 15%; and Indian, 10%.

Capital: Bogotá. Often called “Athens” of America.

Sells: Coffee, oil, gold, bananas.

Buys: Textiles, machinery, metal manufactures, chemicals, transport materials, food products.

Industry: Colombia's wealth comes from her soil. Agricultural products account for more than 70% of exports. Although she has iron and coal, she has no roads to get to the deposits. Oil is bringing increasing wealth.

Colombia is one of the most democratic and progressive countries in Latin America. Dogged by poor transportation, nevertheless Colombia will supply Uncle Sam with increasing quantities of tropical products, and buy an expanding volume of our goods.

Panama Is on the Strategic Spot

GOVERNMENT officials in Panama City recently received this letter from a Florida schoolboy: "Gentlemen . . . Our class project is finding out more about United States possessions overseas. My teacher has assigned me Panama. Could you please give me some information about it?"

Panama government officials gave this lad some information, and his school board a piece of their minds. To the boy: "We realize you need to know more about the Republic of Panama so would like to inform you it is an independent republic, not to be classified as a 'possession of the U. S.' " To the school board: "We wonder that you permit ignorant instructors to teach this sort of thing in your schools."

Yes, it's true! While more closely bound to the United States than any other Latin American republic, Panama is definitely on her own.

However, if this schoolboy should go to Panama City today where the only soldiers are U. S. doughboys and bombers zooming overhead belong to our army; where U. S. money is flooding the town and the Stars and Stripes are a common sight—he'd still be a bit confused about it all. Panamanians themselves have grown so used to having Uncle Sam around that the late (deposed not dead) President Arias decreed all English signs must be changed to Spanish—just to remind Panamanians they are not Yankees.

The Panama Canal, of course, is the cause of it all.

In 1513 Balboa made a four week's hike across the Isthmus of Panama where the Americas are held together by a slender strip of jungle, 35 miles wide. Soon gold from Peru, balsam from El Salvador, and many other New World treasures were

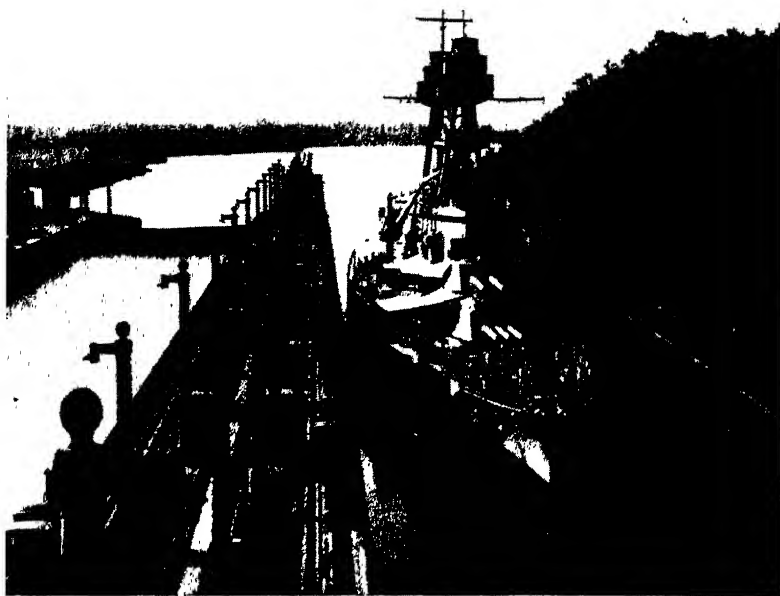
flowing across the Isthmus on the backs of donkeys and men. It became "Cross Roads of the World," and a rich prize for pirates, as spices from the Orient met goods from Europe. This strategic bit of America remained under Spanish rule until 1821, then Panama flew the colonial coop and became a province of Greater Colombia.

Dreams of a waterway across the Isthmus had been in the minds of the New World conquerors for almost three centuries. It was the French who finally put them into action. Fresh from the success of digging the Suez Canal, they tackled the Panamanian jungles in the 1880's, only to be beaten by mountains, mosquitoes and jungles. Their failure whetted the desire of United States engineers to have a try, and negotiations were opened with Colombia for canal rights. The deal almost went through; if it had, there probably wouldn't be any Panama today.

But Colombia's Congress said "No!" after Panamanian province had said "Yes!" That made Panamanians mad. They declared their independence of Colombia in one breath, and in the next said to the United States, "We'll give you the right to build the canal." President Theodore Roosevelt (of the Rough Ridin' Roosevelts) didn't dally. He signed the Canal treaty with one fist, and lifted his other to warn Colombia we wouldn't tolerate any meddling with this new "sovereign nation."

That's the background of the biggest thing in Panama—the Panama Canal. It brought about Panama's secession from Colombia and her birth as a republic, with Uncle Sam at the bedside. It made Panama truly the "Cross Roads of the World," attracting merchants and merchandise from all corners of the globe. It brought money into circulation, raised the standard of living and supplied a big share of the newborn government's revenue. Paradoxically, it has retarded the development and unification of this Maine-sized republic. More about this later; first the Canal:

It was dug between 1904-14 after we had given Panama \$10,000,000 and leased a ten-mile strip across the Isthmus "in perpetuity." That means, while we do not own this Canal Zone, we control it forever, or as long as we pay \$430,000



Crossroads of World. The Panama Canal is 85 feet above the level of Atlantic and Pacific. Boats are raised uphill by means of locks such as the one a warship is just entering. The Canal Zone, a ten mile strip, is rented from Panama by the U. S. Government.

a year. The fee used to be \$250,000 gold, but when we devaluated our dollar to 59 cents, Panama immediately upped the rental to the present figure—none of this devaluated dough for her.

Some smart engineer certainly saved the shovelers a lot of digging—for most of its 40-mile length, the *canal is 85 feet above the level of the Atlantic and Pacific oceans*. To get the boats uphill they have locks. Boats float into a big horse-trough affair, gates are shut, and the tank is filled with water. That lifts the boat to the level of another similar tank or lock; this lock is filled the same way, raising the boat another $28\frac{1}{3}$ feet. Three such locks (at either end of the canal) raise the boats a total of 85 feet to the level of the artificial lake making up the middle part of the canal. This lake was made by backing up a river with a dam so big they have a golf course laid out on top.

Two sets of locks permit two boats to make the ten-hour trip through the canal side by side; in 1939, 5,903 ships went through. One set of locks is now being bomb-proofed, and construction on a third set is under way because of the fear that well-placed bombs might put the canal out of commission. This third set, built at some distance from the other locks, will

be bigger—our navy may decide to build bigger battleships. The present locks will take all present ships with the exception of the *Normandie*, *Queen Mary* and *Queen Elizabeth*.

The entire Canal Zone bristles with military might and activity. Planes range overhead and searchlights are ready to spot any unfriendly visitor with their thin pencils of light. I talked with members of gun crews who are hidden away in dense jungles, on the alert 24 hours a day with 16-inch coastal guns. Anti-aircraft guns are ready to ack-ack at a minute's notice—our civilian plane had orders to fly over the Zone at one particular spot, where we were undoubtedly under careful scrutiny from below. Sea approaches are guarded by planes, guns, torpedo boats and submarines; my camera was even "held for safekeeping." Thousands of troops are on the spot to protect this avenue by which our warships can shuttle from ocean to ocean, for the Canal saves a 10,000 mile trip around the tip of South America.

The Canal Zone, most strategic spot in the Americas today, together with the cities clustered at either end, is a beehive of activity. Not so the rest of the Republic of Panama. Within a few hundred yards of the canal is wilderness, and orchids blooming in the tropical tangles do not make the jungle less hard to penetrate.¹ Primitive Indians roam half of this country, and you can still find blow guns and poison darts within a few miles of 16-inch gun emplacements. Less than three per cent of the land is under cultivation. Life of the Republic, for the most part is a parasite growth on the Canal Zone that cuts Panama's thin and writhing body in the middle.²

"Unfortunately, they have no Kit Carsons or Buffalo Bills in this country," an army officer observed. "The average Panamanian would rather be a city slicker than a pioneer."

The Canal gets the blame. It has been a magnet that has held much of the population near the Zone. "Farmers and farm hands now are deserting the rural areas by the hundreds,

¹ National flower of Panama is the Holy Ghost orchid, a rare white orchid whose center resembles a dove.

² The contortions of this isthmus are responsible for some seemingly paradoxical facts. At Panama City I saw the sun rise in the Pacific; the Atlantic entrance to the canal is west of the Pacific entrance, all because Panama curves like a capital S.

enticed by the high wages being paid in the Canal Zone," an agricultural official lamented. Building of the 300-million-dollar set of locks promises folding money wages. I saw one advertisement promising two dollars a day for "*machete* workers"; on the farm these fellows would get only 75 cents.

There is another cash incentive to working in the Canal Zone. Living costs in Panama are extremely high. But United States government commissaries sell groceries to all workers in the Zone regardless of whether they live there or not. Workers can buy potatoes for \$2.20 from the U. S. commissary, while across the street in Panama proper potatoes sell for \$6.³ Rice, the great food staple of the country, costs only \$2.21 in the Canal Zone; in Panama, \$4.25. All of which makes any fellow want to work in the Canal Zone so he can buy his groceries there. (Groceries for his friends, too—Panama officials complain that there is much grocery bootlegging.)

"The Panama Canal, while bringing us money wealth, has made us dependent upon commercial trade, not upon the natural wealth of our country. That is why most of Panama today is non-productive while we import tremendous quantities of goods from other countries," declared M. E. Melo, Director of Agriculture.

An Indiana farmer would say farming must be a snap in a tropical country where farmers in 1941 were getting \$4 a hundred for potatoes, 15 cents a quart for milk, and 50 cents a dozen for eggs. But Panamanian farmers, (those who have not left for work in the Canal Zone) say they are hard up—that these prices barely give them the cost of production. Reasons Sr. Melo gives for the high cost of producing crops are these: primitive methods; high labor costs; poor transportation; wide fluctuation in prices, and high exchange value of Panama currency.

In this country where not one acre in thirty is cultivated, land seemingly can be had for nothing. Only a fourth of the land is actually owned by individuals and it is valued at \$5.25

³ Strangers have a hard time telling whether they are in the Canal Zone or in Panama. At the Pacific entrance to the Canal, Panama City and Balboa merge as one city, although politically, Panama City is the capital of Panama and Balboa is within the Canal Zone. Same is true of Cristobal and Colon at the Caribbean entrance.



Panama Is Undeveloped. Panama's chief resource—her soil—is sadly undeveloped. Not one acre in thirty is under cultivation. This is a typical farm hut. The family lives by planting a little corn, rice or bananas in clearings hacked out with a machete.

an acre. (The entire country yielded only \$117,000 in land taxes to the government in 1934.) The rest of the country does not belong to any special person, although here and there squatters put up their homes of bamboo poles and palm leaves. They hack a clearing with their machetes and plant their corn, rice or bananas in holes made with sharpened sticks. A machete is the only farm implement many farmers own.

"Few even have the wooden plow," one official told me. "They are just beginning to learn to plow."

The "Balboa," Panamanian coin named for the explorer, has the same value as our dollar. That brings added grief to the farmer for it means his wage costs are high, compared with neighboring Costa Rica where the pay is 20 cents a day. For instance, the cost of producing a pound of coffee in Costa Rica is five cents; in Panama, 16½ cents. Rice is produced in Panama for \$4.52 a hundred pounds; in Ecuador, for only \$2. Panama has high tariffs to protect its farmers; although these tariffs, in turn, have raised the cost of living in Panama. Here

again the Canal Zone comes in—its commissaries sell groceries to Canal Zone workers at half the cost other citizens must pay in Panamanian stores.

Transportation has held back the development of rich agricultural areas. I went from coast to coast in an hour and a half; I saw the Pacific ocean, the Atlantic, and then came back to the Pacific side again—all in the same afternoon. But unfortunately you cannot go buzzing all over Panama that way. The only important railroad is 48 miles long, paralleling the Canal, and that is owned by Uncle Sam. It sounds shocking when you know how much freight has been carried across the Isthmus in the past four centuries, but until April, 1942, you could not drive an automobile from coast to coast in Panama, not even in the Canal Zone.⁴

We started out by auto from Panama City in the direction of South America. After traveling about 45 miles we came to the end of the road. From that point on to the Colombian border is 150 miles of mountains and jungle swamps. This stretch presents the greatest obstacle between Alaska and the Straits of Magellan in building the Pan American Highway. Only a few Indian tribes know much about this unmapped wilderness.

Road building is a tough job in Panama. It rains every day from April to December. Bridge washouts and downpours make it hard to keep up highways even after they are built. It costs money, too, to cut roads through the unfriendly jungle—as much as \$30,000 a mile for just an ordinary road. At that rate 350 miles of road—and that's a drop in the bucket to what is needed—would cost Panama more than her entire government budget.

A road was recently built to connect the Canal Zone with a United States air base. Our government paid \$1,500,000 and Panama paid \$2,500,000. One official thought Uncle Sam was a bit stingy. "The \$2,500,000 means nothing to the United

⁴ The United States has just completed a highway across the Isthmus. For 300 years, Spaniards had a road paved with rocks, but the jungle reclaimed it when the Panama Railroad was built in the 1850's. Uncle Sam bought this railroad when we built the canal. Not wanting any competition for its lucrative business, roadbuilding across the Isthmus was discouraged until war forced financial considerations aside.



Open Air Laundry. When the housewife in Panama (and many other Latin American countries) wants to do the family laundry, she goes to the nearest creek, river or lake, and beats the clothes clean on the rocks. That gets rid of the dirt but it must be hard on clothes.

States, but it is one-fourth of our total budget," he pointed out. (This debt was later liquidated by Uncle Sam.)

Bright spots in Panama's agricultural picture are bananas and cacao—they account for 85 per cent of the total exports. But, as is true in many Latin American countries, these exports bring only indirect benefits to the nation because they are largely controlled by the United Fruit Company. About nine-tenths of the land now utilized is devoted to grazing a rainbow variety of cattle—all colors and all breeds. One official estimated that only one butcher animal annually is produced from 80 acres of land.

Despite the fact that Panama has much untouched virgin soil, this country imports eggs, dairy products, potatoes, pork and rice. The Canal Zone alone imports tremendous quantities of foodstuffs to feed hungry soldiers. Here is a sample of the

monthly consumption in 1941—and it has stepped up tremendously since the war started: 100,000 pounds of cabbage; 45,000 pounds of carrots; 72,000 heads of lettuce; 1,200,000 pounds of potatoes; and 250,000 dozens of eggs. Almost all of this food comes from the United States, because it cannot be bought locally or from neighboring Central American nations. (Plans are underway now to produce much of this food in neighboring Central American republics.)

Some persons say Panama should resign herself to being a commercial nation. She has no coal, oil or iron on which to build a big industry. They say Panama's future lies in foreign trade, that because of high wages and efficient methods



Bread Fruit. In a country where tropical fruits grow everywhere, food must be imported. Agricultural possibilities are tremendous but farmers are just learning to use the wooden plow.

of neighboring countries, Panama cannot hope to compete in agriculture. Sr. Melo has other ideas. "Our wealth lies in our soil. Scientific agriculture will allow our farmers to meet the competition," he told me. "We can teach the farmer how to make more than \$2 a day by staying on the farm."

The new government which swept pro-Nazi Arias out of power in the fall of 1941—five years before his term was up—has breathed new life into the republic's desire to stand on its own feet. Already a broad program has been outlined looking towards development of Panama's land, forests and fisheries.⁵ A million dollar fund has been set aside for agriculture. Another \$325,000 has been earmarked for farm equipment to be bought from the United States.

Rural schools have been enlisted in the drive to make Panama's soil produce. The Minister of Education has decreed that the curricula be radically changed to "harmonize with the intensification of agriculture." The new National School of Agriculture has been opened and irrigation surveys are being made. The government even sponsors a daily radio program.

Panamanian officials are anxious to cooperate in growing non-competing crops for the United States market. Rubber seems to be a promising venture. For some years the Goodyear Rubber Company has had a rubber experimental station in the Canal Zone. Melo believes small farmers could care for a few rubber trees along with their bananas, beans and rice. One more thing Melo would like to have—a flock of full-fledged farmers from the United States to come down and farm. He'll offer them plenty of land, plenty cheap.

Panama City, at the Pacific entrance to the canal, is a cosmopolitan mixture of peoples from all over the world. Chinese ran practically all of the shops until the late Arias government nationalized small business down to, and including, hot-dog joints. Bearded Hindus from far-off India come out on the street to entice you in to see the "very nicest Oriental silks very cheap." Free lance buses, known as *chivas* (goats), whiz recklessly by on the left side of the street. Every ten feet you meet a lottery salesman who can sell you a

⁵ Panama is an Indian word meaning "abundance of fish."



Queen of the Carnival. This Panamanian beauty wears the traditional tumba hombre dress (literally this means man-thrower). The Easter season is a time of great celebration when the *cholos* come to town to take part in holy ceremonies that are a mixture of pagan folklore and Christian pomp.

ticket to win up to \$25,000. (Proceeds go for charitable purposes.)

Canal Zone defense preparations and building of the third set of canal locks have transformed Panama City into a lusty boom town, seething with khaki. They line up to put nickels in hundreds of slot machines; in Panama the one-armed bandit is known as a *traganiquel* (nickel swallower). They dance with dusky hostesses; or they sit down at more expensive cabarets with one of a dozen imported U. S. chorus girls and pay for the girls' colored water at 50 cents a shot.⁶

"Don't you get lonesome?" I asked one soldier.

"Plenty," answered the boy. "When we first come down here from the States we look at these colored hostesses and go home to play cards. Two weeks later, the hostesses at the dance halls do not look so dark. After a month we can hardly tell what color they really are."

Panama City has too many imported people and ideas to be typical of Panama. Out in the rural areas and in the mountains where shy *cholos* live in palm thatched huts you see the real Panamanians. Easter is the season they come to town to dance and take part in holy ceremonies which are a weird mixture of Christian pomp and pagan folklore. Their Easter finery eclipses that seen on Fifth Avenue. The *tumba hombre* (translated literally, it means man-thrower) is the traditional dress of the women; it is a bright colored full skirt worn over numerous petticoats (8 to 10 they told me), with a white voile blouse trimmed in homemade lace. With this dress they wear Panama hats and go barefooted. The man's homespun *montuno* is worn shirttail out, with shin-length pants; he also goes barefooted and wears a Panama hat. (Hats made in Panama are braided, not woven as in Ecuador, home of genuine "Panama" hats.)

There is little Hurrah-for-the-Republic-of-Panama feeling among Panama's 600,000 people for several reasons: Panamanians are red, white, black and yellow. Many sections are

⁶ These hostesses get a commission on the drinks their customers buy. The customer gets his whiskey but the hostess always drinks harmless flavored water for which her table partner may pay up to fifty cents.



These Women Boss. Many primitive tribes of Indians still live in Panama and in islands off the coast. The San Blas Indians won't let white men stay overnight in their little islands. They use coconuts for money—they're worth about a cent each.

isolated. It has been a republic less than 40 years. And it exists under the shadow of Uncle Sam's influence.

A large chunk of Panama is home for various tribes of primitive Indians with whom the government has treaties but over whom it has little control. San Blas Indians, who let the women boss and wear gold rings in their noses, gather most of Panama's five million coconuts. They know the true value of the coconut; they use it for food, drink its milk, use the shells for utensils, roof their houses with the leaves. To them coconuts are money, worth almost a cent each.

There are no soda fountains in the rural areas, but if you're thirsty just have a native shinny up a coconut palm, and get you a half-ripe coconut. With one whack of his razor sharp machete, he cuts the green outer husk and also the inside shell which has not yet hardened. Insert a straw, and you have one of the luxuries of the tropics—a cool drink, sealed in nature's own sanitary wrapper, containing all of the nutriment which goes to make up the meat of a ripe coconut.

The government tries hard to maintain its national identity. Immigration has been restricted to members of the white race because of a feeling that Panama was "getting too black."⁷ Large numbers of West Indian Negroes brought in during the building of the Canal have not assimilated readily. Because the English language threatened to become almost as common as Spanish in Panama City, a 1941 law decreed that all display signs must be in Spanish; English could be printed in small letters below. Sloppy Joe's Bar overnight became "*Cantina Jose El Abandonado*" or "Cantina Joseph, the Abandoned One." An order also compelled the publisher of a Spanish-English newspaper to fold it Spanish side out.

There are many reasons why United States and Panama are bound to get along. The bulk of Panama's foreign trade is a simple exchange of goods with the United States. Revenues from the Canal Zone and indirect effect of the Zone payroll have brought millions of dollars to this poor country. Most important reason for cooperation, of course, is the defense of the Panama Canal.

That cooperation appeared doubtful after the election in 1940 of President Arnulfo Arias who immediately promulgated a new constitution and extended his term to six years. He reserved for himself the power to establish monopolies and expropriate property. Showing definite pro-Axis leanings, he did some sniping at the United States. Uncle Sam, with one eye cocked on Germany and Japan and the other on the Canal that made our navy a two-ocean navy, began to get the jitters.

But President Arias left five years of his term unserved. In the fall of 1941 he made a trip to Cuba "for his health"; during his absence the government was quietly taken over by Panamanian patriots, headed by present President LaGuardia. The new government quickly assured the United States of its firm support. Any threat to the Panama Canal will not come from Panama. This nation knows on which side its bread is buttered.

⁷ Canal Zone post offices have stamp windows marked "Gold" and "Silver"; the "gold" is for whites and the "silver" is for Negroes. It is a hang-over of canal building days when whites were paid in gold, Negroes in silver.

Panama At A Glance

Size: 32,380 square miles; about the size of Maine.

People: 600,000; 53% mestizo; 17% white; 20% Negro and mulatto; 9% Indian; 1% Oriental.

Capital: Panama City.

Sells: Bananas, cacao, beef, coconuts.

Buys: Manufactured products and foodstuffs, many for tourist trade.

Industry: Biggest business in the country is the Panama Canal. Agriculture, source of real wealth for the country, has been neglected.

Panama is dominated by the Panama Canal Zone. Transportation and agriculture throughout the country is little developed.

Oxcarts and Democracy in Costa Rica

“THE finest coffee, the prettiest girls and the most democratic country”—these things, the National Tourist Board assured me, sets Costa Rica apart from the rest of her Central American neighbors. “You’ll like Costa Rica!”

To this I can now add: Costa Rica is that white country of the Caribbean where bananas are fed to pigs and oxcarts look like circus chariots—a nation whose teachers are more numerous than her soldiers; whose families have twice as many babies as we do in the United States. I did like Costa Rica!

This little country will go down in history as the first American nation to declare war on Japan after the treacherous Pearl Harbor attack—she beat the United States by a few hours. Half the size of Indiana with an army of 325 men, Costa Rica boldly told the rest of the world she was on Uncle Sam’s side. Her declaration is more important than the size of her army would indicate, for Costa Rica lies within 200 miles of the Panama Canal. But Costa Rica needs no apologies—650,000 Costa Ricans, 80 per cent white, are convinced they have the No. 1 country of the Caribbean.¹

Among neighboring nations plagued with strong man dictators, petty revolutions and illiterate populations, Costa Rica does stand out. Observers who know Latin America agree this nation of small landowners is one of the Latin American countries that can realistically be called a democracy.

Paradoxically, Costa Rica’s democracy and progress is based on the very factors that prompted an early Spanish

¹ Costa Rica’s population is estimated to be 80% white, 15% mestizo (White-Indian), 4% Negro, less than 1% Indian.



Squeezing Sugar Cane. Getting refined sugar from cane is a million-dollar business. So in many countries like Costa Rica, the people prefer *panela*, or unrefined brown sugar, which they make in little mills like this one. The oxen turn this grinder to squeeze out the juice, which is then boiled down like we make sorghum.

governor to call this country the "poorest province in the Americas." Alas, for the greedy Spaniards, Costa Rica had no gold or silver. The governor admitted he had to sow and reap grain himself to keep from starving. Then, too, the Indians were difficult. The few who lived here did not tame as easily as they had in other countries where the Spaniards made slaves of them. So, not only did the people have to take up farming for a living, they had to take hold of a hoe handle and work it themselves.

Sugar cane, corn, cacao, coffee and bananas became the gold of Costa Rica as industrious Spanish peasants—better farmers than *conquistadores*—dug their living from the soil. They laid the foundations for one of the few small-farm agri-cultures in the Americas today. For example: Coffee, Costa Rica's biggest crop, is produced on 25,474 farms averaging less than 14 acres each. In all, it is estimated there are about

90,000 land owners out of a population of 650,000.² When I flew in from Panama, I could almost tell where the Costa Rican border was—the indifferent farming of Panama gave way to a crazy-quilt pattern of neatly kept land patches.

Costa Rica is a mountainous country, and from its volcanic peaks (some of them still smoking) I could see both oceans. Although Costa Rica means "rich coast," the coastal plains hemming the uplands are hot and dripping wet, raining as it does 300 days of the year. Leaving these unhealthy lowlands to the Negroes who work on the banana and cacao plantations, three-fourths of the people live on the mile-high plateau where coffee grows and nights are cool.

Readers may say it is the farmer in me, but again I must report that agriculture is practically the only source of wealth Costa Rica has. She has no coal, oil or iron, so her manufacturing is restricted largely to processing farm products. She grows her food and trades coffee, bananas and cacao for the manufactured goods she must have; nearly 85 per cent of her exports are farm products.³

Costa Rica is still an oxcart country, and to travel far you must climb into a brightly colored solid-wheeled job that would stand out in a parade of circus chariots. The intricate designs on these oxcarts are different, and as I roamed the rural areas, any small boy could tell me from what village a man came by looking at the intricate design on his oxcart, (just as our kids know car models and license plates.)

Farm homes and land values vary with the distance from the few roads and railroads. However, the average home is a two-room affair, built either of adobe or rough boards, with thatched roofs and sides. (Iron roofing is a sign of prosperity.) The front porch is an outside living room where corn and beans and onions are brought to dry. Furniture is limited to hand-hewn necessities and cooking is carried on out of doors, or under a nearby lean-to. An outdoor oven may be near the house and washing is done in the nearest stream.

² Statistics are vague, many land owners do not admit they own land, fearing taxes. Then, too, much land is "held by possession," squatters who have use of the land, but no title.

³ In 1937, coffee made up 51.1% of total exports; bananas, 21%; cacao beans, 16.6%.



Coffee Must Be Good. These girls pick over the coffee to remove all discolored or broken beans. If inspectors find even 12 bad beans in 80 pounds, the girls must pick it all over again. Costa Rica jealously guards her coffee's reputation—and it ranks with the best in the world.

If a farmer has a machete, hoe and oxcart he can farm; that is all of the implements most of them do have. Many fields are so steep it would be impossible to use machinery if they had it. In 1938, Costa Rica imported \$63,000 worth of tractors and accessories and \$60,000 worth of machetes—in other words, about one tractor for every thousand machetes.

Planted in front of the beautiful San José airport is a coffee bush, a banana plant and a stalk of sugar cane, introducing the three ranking crops of the republic. They are proudest of their coffee.

You can be sure of your Costa Rican coffee. I saw girls pick it over bean by bean, tossing out all broken, discolored and uneven ones. Two girls work together, and when they have carefully sorted some 80 pounds, they dump it all in a big shallow box. Two male inspectors (more impressed with their country's fine coffee than pretty girl reputation) cast sharp eyes at the coffee. If they find more than 12 bad beans among

the thousands of perfect ones, the girls have to go through the entire 80 pounds again.

Over the past 50 years, Costa Rica coffee growers have developed a system of fertilizing, special drying, cultivation and seed selection that has made their coffee world famous for its flavor. That flavor brought premium prices in English markets before the war. The United States now takes half of Costa Rica's 400,000 bag production, but pays less than the English price because we do not drink our coffee straight—we use a blend. War has hurt the Costa Rican pocketbook since half of her cash income comes from coffee exports. Slack sales or low prices are to Costa Rica what a staggering wage cut is to a working man. It means this country cannot buy as much gasoline, machinery, clothes and bread.⁴

Bananas have brought a racial problem to this country,



Oxcarts Look Like Circus Chariots. Every oxcart is gaudily painted like this one. And any small boy can tell you from which village a farmer comes by looking at the wheels on his cart—every village has its distinctive design. Lack of adequate transportation is one of Costa Rica's biggest problems.

⁴ To help cushion the effect of this market loss, the export tax of \$1.50 a bag was removed, and an U. S. Import-Export Bank loan of \$500,000 was made to Costa Rica to help finance the farmers and tide them over their war difficulties.



Bananas and Negroes. Costa Rica is proud of its white race. But Negroes are about the only ones who can live and work on the hot banana plantations along the coast. A leaf disease is forcing the plantation owners to abandon the Caribbean lands and to start new ones on the Pacific coast.

proud of its white people. Costa Rica was the first Caribbean nation to export bananas—plantations were encouraged at first to develop freight business for the new railroads. These plantations were located along the Atlantic coast, and West Indian Negroes were imported to work in the steaming lowlands. In the past four years, however, the dreaded leaf disease has practically wiped out banana production along the Caribbean.

The United Fruit Company, now opening plantations on the Pacific side, wants to transfer its Negro workers. Costa Ricans do not like to see the Negroes spreading to other areas. "We cannot look with indifference on this black invasion," declared one official.

Cacao is the other important export crop. In colonial days there was real money in cacao; in fact, cacao beans *were* money, the accepted medium of exchange. However, cacao has taken a back seat to coffee, despite Mom's best efforts. (Dad was the only one who could have coffee in our family—all of

us kids had to drink cocoa because "it's better for growing boys.")

"Even scientifically managed plantations do not pay," declared one official, and he told of the United Fruit Company giving cacao lands outright to Negro laborers, (cacao has been planted where disease wiped out banana plantations.) He also said something that would floor a CIO business agent, "We pay labor about 20 cents a day. That's too expensive to allow this country's cocoa to compete with the East African production." The United States formerly bought most of our cocoa from Africa's Gold Coast, where other black laborers sweat to put out a cheaper product.

Although these cash crops are all important to Costa Rica, little patches of food crops take up more acreage. Unfortunately, only one-eighth of the arable land is now under cultivation. And despite low taxes, cheap land and a stable government, Costa Rica must import considerable quantities of wheat, rice, corn, cattle, dairy and pork products for her own use.

Land is valued at \$1 to \$150 an acre, depending upon how far it is from a road. That brings up one of the big limiting factors, lack of transportation. From San José it is impossible to drive more than a few miles in any direction. There is no highway to either coast, although a narrow gauge railroad does connect the capital with the coasts. In 1942, to go from San José to either Panama or Nicaragua (Costa Rica's neighbors), you had to fly as I did, or ride a donkey. Even oxcart trails bog down in the rainy seasons.

Do not blame the government for lack of interest in developing better transportation; roadbuilding is a tremendous problem. Roads cost money, and the government budget is small. Volcanic peaks and a fruitful nature make a picturesque country but poor road beds. And the rains! Several years ago a 16-inch rain washed out one of the railroads and held up traffic for four months. Costa Rica has fuel problems, too; gasoline for autos and coal for locomotives must be imported. (There are only 3,413 autos in Costa Rica, and both railroads are losing money.)



Yoking the Pigs. Despite low taxes and cheap land, Costa Rica must import considerable quantities of food, including pork. Seldom do farmers raise hogs. They just have a pig or two, and put yokes on them to keep them from straying too far away.

That is why the Pan American Highway project has made such a big hit in Central America. "This highway will be a great boon to agriculture," the Minister of Agriculture told me. "It will open up sections now untapped. We can grow more of our own food, and we can sell many farm products to the Canal Zone. By helping us build roads, the United States is giving us invaluable aid."

One section of this highway is now being completed from San José to the Panamanian border with a \$4,600,000 loan. I saw barefooted Costa Ricans with machetes and spades working alongside big tractors and modern road equipment, helping whack this road through jungle and over mountains. United States engineers are supervising the job.

The government has awakened to the need of promoting agriculture since the opening of a School of Agriculture in 1927. (Before that the only higher education offered was in

law and pharmacy.) There have been 240 graduates of this school, and all have jobs. I talked with one, working for \$30 a month in the Ministry of Agriculture. "I realize \$30 a month is not much according to U. S. standards, but I have a feeling I'm really contributing something for the good of my country," he explained.

The first agricultural experiment station has just been established, and notice is being taken of soil erosion that is scarring many hillsides. The Institute of Tropical Agriculture has been set up in Costa Rica for the study of tropical crops. The United States will finance it. Uncle Sam's technicians have set up a rubber nursery on the wet coastlands where a big United States rubber company has been experimenting for the past five years.

Costa Rica has its leaders who realize the economic progress of the country depends upon agricultural development. Sr. J. Joaquin Peralta believes there is a big future for dairying in Costa Rica. As a Congressman he makes \$85 a month. As farmer, he must make more—he has just imported a \$50,000 purebred Brown Swiss herd from the United States. These cows are all real bluebloods but I'll bet that never before had they been fed banana salad twice a day. Banana trees are used to shade coffee bushes on the Peralta farm, the fruit is fed to hogs, and the stalks are sliced for the cows.

"We have received much real help from the dairymen of your country, but I would like to see some of them come to Costa Rica," Sr. Peralta told me. "We want American immigrants because they always raise the standard of living wherever they go. Europeans are too poor."

I'll always remember Costa Rica as a respecter of age. Sr. Modesto Martínez, outstanding authority on Costa Rican agriculture, knew I was coming to Costa Rica. When I got off at the airport I saw no one who looked as if he wanted to say "Hello!" so I took a cab to town. Thirty minutes later Sr. Martínez showed up at my hotel with apologies.

"I was at the airport and saw you get off the plane," he said. "The reason I didn't speak to you was because I was busy looking for this Sr. Strohm, the Prairie Farmer Ambassador. I expected an old man—with a big belly."



Orchid Is National Flower. Yes, the orchids grow wild in Costa Rica. But it takes breeding to make them pretty and valuable, although I bought a bunch of fifty orchids for a nickel in one country. In Costa Rica I got into hot water trying to talk orchids with an international expert.

Sr. Martínez has an unusual experiment under way. From Africa he has imported a giant species of sweet pea which grows higher than a man's head; he believes it will supply nitrogen to the soil and make a real forage crop. (Think what a smart advertising man could do with milk from dairy cattle grazing in pastures of blooming sweet peas!)

I told Señor Martínez I wanted to take some color pictures of his orchids, the national flower of Costa Rica. By this time we had become acquainted and he was reconciled to my youth. He even took it for granted that I was an orchid expert, and so invited a florist who deals internationally in orchids to come along with us. We saw many gorgeous varieties growing in tree crotches, on rocks and in bamboo pots. Right off the bat, this expert started unreeling his choicest Latin phrases, going into technical raptures, as he addressed me:

"Of course, you recognize this common variety, the *cattleya dowiana*," he stated rather than inquired.

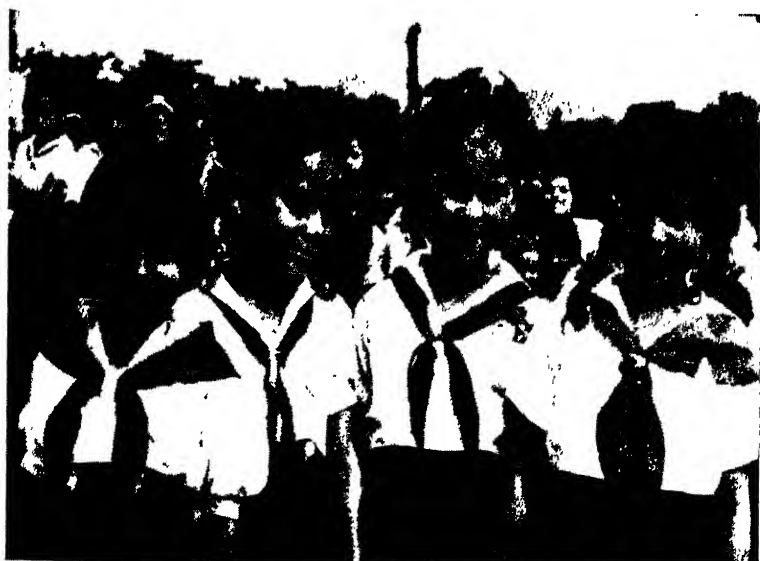
"Oh, the *cattleya dowiana*!" I replied, when all I knew about orchids was that some fellows who have girls pay \$5.00 each for them on special occasions, and that I had never bought any.

"And the *cattleya gigas*?" (That was a purple number.) "And here is the *stanhopea de devonensis*," he pointed out.

"Gosh, it's purty!" was my brilliant comment.

On one of my rambling trips into the country, I saw dozens of little schoolgirls scampering about the fields like frisky colts. Their teacher takes them on weekly hikes, I learned, to visit coffee and dairy farmers; at school they have gardens and other soil projects.

Costa Ricans are proud of the fact that in literacy they rank near the top in Latin America, only Uruguay and Argentina being in challenging distance. In one year the government spent one-fourth of the entire budget for education, more than



Education Is National Defense. Costa Ricans are all proud that they have more teachers than soldiers. In education, this nation is among the first rank in Latin America and one of the few real democracies. These school girls were having a hike into the country as part of their school work when I took this picture.

twice as much as for national defense. "We think education is national defense," an official declared. However, because of the relative isolation of many sections of the country, a teacher told me education is often an accomplishment but not a tool.

Along with education, great strides have been made in health advancement. Malaria and hookworm have been reduced through the cooperative efforts of United Fruit Company, Rockefeller Foundation and the government. But hookworm cannot be controlled until people wear shoes, and most of Costa Rica's rural population goes barefooted. Countries worried about their falling birth rates might get ideas from this fertile country—the birthrate of 46.2 per cent per thousand is more than twice that of the United States and is highest in Latin America.

Life is comparatively simple in this land where the president gets \$265 a month and population of the capital and biggest city is only 78,000. San José has clean streets, good stores, an elaborate National Theater and beautiful plazas. The thrice weekly band concert is top entertainment. Girls stroll around the plaza clock-wise, the boys circulate the other way. Although Costa Rica has had co-education for many years, and women are much advanced over those of other countries, the old Spanish customs still prevail. That means the woman's place is in the home.

"But we're getting to the place now where it is no longer a sin to take a girl to the movies without her mother," one young chap told me.

Critics within Costa Rica have said that climate, poor health and isolation have robbed these people of their initiative. They cite that Costa Rica needs roads; that she needs to develop her agriculture, at least to the point of self-sufficiency in food crops. But it takes money to build roads and establish agricultural experiment stations. Costa Rica lacks money, not initiative. All of which brings up the handicaps of a tiny country with a small population and the overhead of a sovereign nation, bucking the world with a national budget of less than six million dollars.

Uncle Sam can be happy that he has a Canal Zone neighbor that has done so much with so little—and who sees eye to eye with him on democracy.

Costa Rica At A Glance

Size: 23,000 square miles.

People. 650,000. 80% white; 15% mestizo; 4% Negro; less than 1% Indian.

Capital: San Jose. Population, 78,000.

Sells: Coffee, bananas, cacao beans.

Buys: Manufactured goods of all kinds.

Industry: Lacking coal, oil and iron, this country has little manufacturing. Her wealth is largely agricultural; 85% of her total exports are farm products.

This country is one of the few democracies in Latin America, one of the few nations where most of the people can read and write. Costa Ricans are convinced they have the No. 1 country in the Caribbean.

XIII.

Nicaragua Is Pro-Uncle Sam

NICARAGUA, biggest country in Central America, is a farming nation where gold digging and politics are sidelines. Revolutions and earthquakes are her bogeymen; poverty and poor transportation, her main problems. Nine-tenths of the foreign trade is with the United States. Government is an airtight dictatorship that is 99 per cent pro-Uncle Sam. And Nicaragua, you may recall, is that hot spot where our U. S. Marines did a 20-year stretch.

I don't know too much about *all* of Nicaragua—nobody does, since you must be at least an amateur explorer to get from one side of this republic to the other. Estimates of its area run from 49,000 to 57,000 square miles, which would make it as big as Florida or Wisconsin. The census taker, too, must estimate, and his latest guess is about 1,375,000 people.

Kipling's words about East being mighty far from West fits Nicaragua. The Caribbean half is almost completely isolated from the rest of the country, unconnected by either road or railroad. Except for a few banana plantations and sawmills, this eastern region is wet, forested and undeveloped. On the Mosquito Coast (so-called because of the Miskitto Indians) live the "Zambos," mixtures of Indian and Negro blood, who speak more English than Spanish.

However, the Nicaragua that counts is a narrow mountainous strip between Lake Nicaragua and the Pacific where Momotombo volcano rears its smoking crown. Most of the farming, cities and people are concentrated here in a quarter of the country. The people are white, Indian and mixtures of the two, and the majority of them live from the land.

The industrial picture of Nicaragua is the old story of "no coal, no iron, no oil." She must import all machinery and



Market in Managua. If you want to know what a country grows, go to the market where the people bring their produce to sell and swap. These shoppers carry their baskets balanced on their heads. Rice, beans, plantains and tortillas make up most of the meals.

fuel. The only minerals produced in quantity are gold and silver, and most of this profit goes into pockets of United States and Canadian mine owners.¹

From her farm crops, grazing lands and timber, Nicaragua lives—though not too well. Nine-tenths of the people are extremely poor because the other tenth own most of the country. Workers in the rural areas get from 10 to 16 cents a day. A cook in the capital city may get \$44 a month, while the white collar clerk draws a monthly salary of \$12. Land holdings are usually large with many families living on and working the land as 20th century serfs.

Coffee is the main money crop. I visited a coffee finca, or plantation, on the volcanic mountain slopes where they produce such excellent mild coffee for blending purposes. Each

¹ Because of Uncle Sam's benevolent policy of buying gold at \$35 an ounce, \$5,900,000 of the yellow metal was dug up in Nicaragua in 1940 and buried in Kentucky. Gold has supplanted coffee as chief export. In 1940 it accounted for 63% of total exports compared to 23% for coffee.

family on this farm—there are nearly a hundred—gets a house and food for 12 months of the year, plus 15 cents for each day's work. Everyone works—men, women and children. Children start in when they're ten; since it takes two boys to make a man, they get only 15 cents between them, and only one adult ration of food. At 16 they become men and are raised to 15 cents a day.

The *patrón* of the finca is the boss, doctor, *padre*, judge and anything else that these people need. Families stay on generation after generation, working 12 months a year pruning coffee trees and planting and trimming shade trees (coffee must not be sunburned, you know). There are no schools within miles and few of these people can read or write. During the coffee picking season, when blanket invitations are issued to coffee pickers, relatives and friends of the finca workers show up from near and far for a combination family reunion and harvest. They work and have fun; and when they get drunk, the *patrón* takes care of them, and also metes out their punishment.

Home for most of the people living in the rural areas is a hut of one or two rooms with a dirt floor. The cook stove is an open fire. Rice, beans, plantains and tortillas are the "vittles" and vinegar is made from bananas. Most important utensil is the stone rolling pin used to grind their coffee and crush corn for tortillas.

Farmers produce just about enough cotton for Nicaraguan needs. The crop does not have to be very big in a country where boys under twelve wear nothing, and even adult shirt-tails are short. As I saw youngsters playing sandlot baseball and shooting slingshots, all with a minimum of covering, I realized clothing is really a mark of prestige and prosperity—not an absolute necessity in these lands where moisture, not temperature, divides the seasons.

The banana business in Nicaragua has been dealt knockout punches by the leaf disease that has completely wiped out banana plantations all along the Caribbean coast of Central America. Plantations in Nicaragua have been moved over to the Pacific side where irrigation and spraying have been intro-

duced. Timber is the only remaining cash crop in this wilderness half along the Caribbean where U. S. Marines spent two years vainly searching for Revolutionist Sandino. Very little timber has been cut, although the 10 million acres of forests boast a variety of woods ranging from pine to mahogany.

Unheralded in the statistics but vitally important to Nicaraguans at mealtime are the scattered patches of corn, beans, rice and plantains. In some sections farmers get three crops of corn a year and, as a general rule, it does not take too much effort to scratch a living from the soil. However, agriculture as a whole is backward—only three per cent of the land is under cultivation, and but little more is used for stock raising. There is even a scarcity of some food products. (A govern-



Chicken Goes to Market. There are few cars and large sections of the country can be reached only by oxcart or donkey. It's unusual when a chicken gets a ride to market in a car like this one. More often, chickens ride in a basket balanced on the head of a woman.

ment official told me of sending his cook to every market in Managua one week-end to buy a chicken. Even though she met incoming oxcarts and trains, the cook found no chicken for the Sunday dinner. Some diplomats get their carrots and lettuce by plane from New Orleans.)

Government and farmers doubtless are in part responsible for a listless agriculture, but not entirely. Farmers had bitter battles with drouth and grasshoppers in 1940. Although two- and three-inch rains are called "showers", periodic drouths reveal the need for irrigation. During the rainy season soil does not last long unless it is covered; it is good business to let weeds and grass grow in coffee fields and other lands before those two-inch "showers" start. As for the grasshoppers, the government was forced to order a one-day conscription of every able-bodied man to fight the winged enemy. The 'hoppers took everything in their march, cutting a swath like a scorched earth campaign.

Farming methods, except on the better coffee and banana plantations are very crude. The wooden plow, team of oxen, machete and two-wheeled cart are standard equipment. A machinery salesman estimates there are not more than a dozen tractors at work on farms in the entire country.

Livestock would not take any state fair ribbons. I saw some scrawny pigs tied outside farm huts, others with yokes to keep them out of mischief. A young man, fresh from the United States, was going to "show the natives" how to be a scientific hog raiser. His story:

"You cannot compete with the native who buys a pig, just weaned, for 30 cents and turns it loose to pick up what roots it can find. He lets the pig in the house at night so it won't be stolen and feeds it on bananas and any scraps left over from the table. At the end of two years the pig may weigh 200 pounds. Hogs are raised for their lard since the meat is worth little. A fair price is \$5.50 for the lard, \$1.50 for the meat." And then he added:

"I bought corn to feed my purebred hogs. But the corn was too expensive and my hogs got sick. No, you can't compete with these natives!"



Sleeping in Mosquito Tent. It isn't all fun, traveling in the tropics. In Managua, I had to sleep under a mosquito tent. There happened to be a small hole in it, so I spent most of the night hunting down mosquitoes. "Don't drink unboiled water" is another caution to travelers.

Cattle hold the brightest prospects for the future development of the country. Most of the fortunes of wealthy Nicaraguans were made either in politics or cattle. With the exception of an annual roundup, cattle are allowed to roam and multiply according to their own inclinations—bull calves are seldom castrated before they are three years old. Of doubtful breeding, Nicaraguan cattle do have the merit of being able to get along with the tropical heat and ticks, make beef, and give a little milk on the side.

Sorry transportation has done much to hold back the internal development of Nicaragua. Neither roads nor railroads connect this nation with neighboring Costa Rica and Honduras. Although it is only 180 miles from coast to coast, the Caribbean section is isolated from the rest of the country. For instance, corn must be imported to feed the people along this Caribbean coast, while the Pacific area of Nicaragua is

exporting thousands of bushels to other Central American countries. It is said that even revolutions start brewing in the east, out of reach of the constabulary, and spread west. There are only about 500 miles of all-weather road in the country for the 2,000 trucks, cars and buses.

I met one grandma who had a 35-mile donkey ride to town; from another section, a group of wives and daughters of rich landowners rode on coffee bags strapped to mule backs, to get to Managua to see "Gone With the Wind."

Building of the Pan American Highway to these people is something like striking oil on a worthless forty. With the help of a U. S. Import-Export Bank loan, Nicaragua is now at work on her 245-mile section of this highway. Half of it was already finished in 1941 and modern machinery was crawling over good-sized mountains and undeveloped land. Potentially productive areas have already been tapped.

If ever another canal is built connecting the Atlantic with the Pacific it will be a barge canal across Nicaragua. The San Juan river connecting Lake Nicaragua with the Caribbean Sea provides a waterway extending within a few miles of the Pacific. A canal, using this waterway, has been talked of for more than 300 years, and was seriously considered before the Panama Canal was built. Today you can get more excitement by whispering that Uncle Sam is going to build such a canal than by inciting a revolution. Uncle Sam has a 99-year lease, and dozens of surveys have been made. Nicaraguans want us to build the canal, but the best guess is that it will not be built—at least not for a number of years.

Government aid to agriculture has been strictly limited in the past. One official told me that eight successive ministers of agriculture stopped all projects initiated by their immediate predecessors, and started something different. The new projects lasted only as long as the minister, to be tossed aside as he was tossed out. With continuity lacking, agriculture has had no well-planned program to utilize the limited funds available. At one time the only school of agriculture had 18 students and eight professors. Agricultural credit has been hard to get, even by paying interest rates up to 24 per cent. Landowners themselves have not been too interested in good



On the President's Farm. These workers are unloading a cart load of grass for President Somoza's cattle. The government is seeking to improve its livestock by importing purebred cattle which can serve as foundation stock.

farming; many men with money have invested in land merely as a safeguard against loss when the currency fluctuated.

But agriculture is getting a new deal from the government of President Somoza, who himself has a dairy farm and several cattle ranches. Purebred cattle have been imported to form foundation herds from which good blood may be distributed all over the country.² Thousands of baby chicks were brought in by airplane, six per cent loans have been made available, and the first milk pasteurization plant is now being built.

It is hot in Nicaragua. It was 100 in the shade when I went to call on Minister of Agriculture General José Zelaya, in my shirt sleeves. The General noticed I had "forgotten my coat" and said it would be "no trouble at all" for him to stop at my hotel to pick it up before we went to lunch. Very considerate, the General. Lunch was served on the terrace of the only

² Dr. John Ashton, Texas A. & M., served as agricultural adviser to the government in 1940-41. He helped get this program under way.



Agricultural Cooperation. Latin American countries in general appreciate technical advice on agriculture—their main source of wealth which has been sadly neglected for centuries. Dr. John Ashton (left) served a year as agricultural adviser to the government of Nicaragua. General José Zelaya, Minister of Agriculture, thinks his country can grow rubber and Manila hemp.

building in Managua with an elevator. But the elevator was out of order that day, so we walked up the four floors.

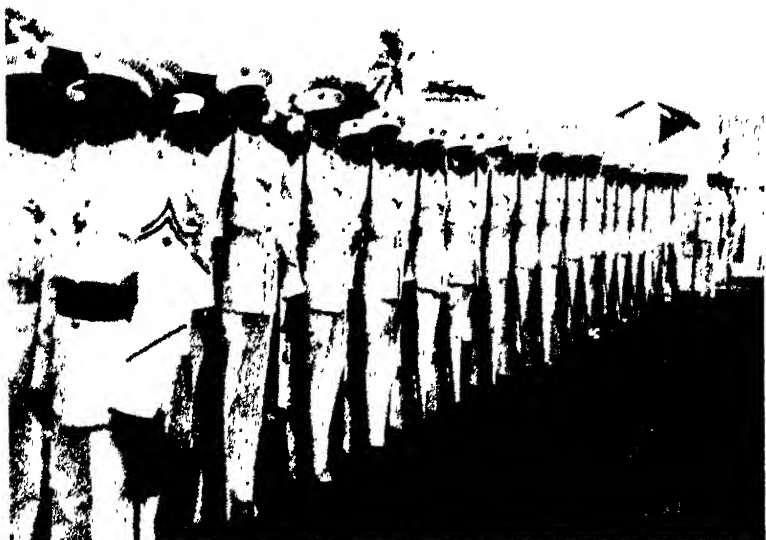
"Nicaragua has for years realized the value of closer United States - Nicaraguan relations," he declared, between bites from the five-course dinner. "Germans and Italians have done much propagandizing here while your Uncle Sam has slept. Nicaragua is ready to cooperate to the hilt with the United States because your country is a natural market and supplier for our needs."³

³ In 1940, the United States took 93% of Nicaragua's exports, supplied 84% of her imports.

And the General had a suggestion to make. "I believe the two biggest opportunities for developing non-competing products lie in rubber and Manila hemp. Nicaraguans would be glad to furnish the land, labor and willingness; your country would have to furnish experts and maybe some capital. What Nicaragua needs is capital and technical experts. In agriculture, we could use an entomologist, agronomist, veterinarian and an irrigation expert. We've tried to get some of these men from your country, but unfortunately we cannot pay high salaries. Then, too, few of your countrymen speak Spanish," concluded the General.

(Note to Uncle Sam: There it is, right in your lap—the opportunity to be a Good Neighbor to most of these Latin American nations. You've flooded these countries with musicians, movie actors and novelists whose very middle name is "Culture." But Uncle, these nations don't want our *culture*—they do need, and want, our *agriculture*. Nicaragua, for example: The naive lady on your payroll who wrote to this country and asked, "Will you please line up an itinerary to permit me to visit some of the children's hospital clinics in the outlying rural districts." Now Uncle, you know they have no children's clinics anywhere in Nicaragua; an official told me he bet the lady would be surprised to know that she must fork a donkey to reach "outlying rural districts." Why don't we replace this well-meaning but blundering type of Good Neighbor missionary with more technicians and farm experts? Keep up the good work our U. S. Department of Agriculture has started with the rubber survey. Enlarge it! These nations have seen enough of our cocktail drinking diplomats—for a change let's send someone who knows how to handle a manure fork.)

One of the best examples of U. S. cooperation with a Latin American country is the Nicaraguan Military Academy. Two years ago General Somoza asked Friend Franklin Roosevelt to send down an army officer to head the military academy. When Gen. C. L. Mullins (the General is his Nicaraguan rank) arrived in Nicaragua, he found there was no academy, no school, no equipment and no students. He built equipment, and interested barefoot country boys. He fought and won a



Nicaragua's West Point. By presidential request, a U. S. army officer helped set up this military school. The purpose of the academy is to turn out leaders as well as soldiers—men who can return to their villages and teach agriculture and other trades to develop the country.

battle to make the entrance exams strictly on merit, rather than family position or politics. (That, in Latin America, is a greater victory than of arms.) Gen. Mullins built the academy to the point where it is the pride of the president and entire country.

General Mullins' thesis is this: It takes the army to command respect; it has always ruled, and he who controls the army controls Nicaragua. His idea is to make the military academy turn out men with honor and character, to divorce them from politics and to teach them agriculture and other trades so when they return home they will be a distinct asset and leaders in their communities. Such an academy should be a real force for the good of the entire country. The General's wife even made me promise to send her bulletins on the best way to raise onions—she and "her boys" were planning a garden. (And I'll bet Gen. Mullins is the only *gringo* who can go down in the basement of the Presidential palace and get machine gun ammunition for target practice.)

Managua, the capital city of 100,000, has a horsey smell about it because of the taxis. Two bony nags pull the taxibuggies, and a barefooted driver whips. This city, where the water is turned off at night, was almost completely destroyed by an earthquake in 1931. Every morning at dawn, I was certain another earthquake had arrived because oxcarts with solid wheels, jolting through the streets to market, shook the entire building. An imposing Capitol building and Cathedral have just been completed, and the rest of Managua has been rebuilt. Ruben Dario Park, named for Nicaragua's greatest poet, is an oasis in a rather drab city.

Nothing drab about the city market though. I jostled through crowded piles of bananas, flowers, corn and cashew nuts, hardly able to keep my feet, while women shoppers strolled along casually with baskets of chickens and vegetables balanced on their heads.

Nicaragua is pretty well acquainted with Uncle Sam; our marines were guests of this country for nearly 20 years. We first sent marines there in 1912 "to preserve order" and "protect American lives and property." (United States' direct investments in Nicaragua at the end of 1936 amounted to only \$4,500,000, the smallest in any Latin American country.) Although our marines were not finally withdrawn until 1933, they were not exactly unwelcome. Every president in power wanted them there because they preserved a stability in a nation where revolutions were almost as periodic as the change of seasons. The city people liked the money the marines spent. But a certain class called Uncle Sam an imperialist; a dollar diplomat; wielder of the Big Stick; and other names for which there is no suitable translation.

This has all changed since General Somoza became president. When Somoza toured our country in 1939, President Roosevelt met him at the railroad station and Washington, D. C. conducted an all-out parade (in reality, a dress rehearsal for the coming visit of the King and Queen of England.) Somoza realized this, but nevertheless has said that Roosevelt went out of his way to treat him, "the president of a poor, small country," as an equal.



Cashew Nuts and Fruit. This little girl was selling cashew nuts at the market in Managua. You can see the nut attached to the yellow fruit. But in Nicaragua they eat this yellow fruit—and throw the nut away.

On election night in 1940, Somoza had the members of the United States Legation to the palace for dinner, listening to the presidential election returns over the radio. Observers say he was like a small boy rooting for his team, and when Roosevelt's election was assured, he embraced everyone present as if he'd just won a great personal victory.

It is generally conceded that Dictator-President Somoza, who plays a good hand of poker and is a 33-degree Mason, has the best interests of Nicaragua at heart. He has told friends that when he came into office 75 per cent of the funds went into politicians' pockets. Now only 25 per cent goes to the politicians, and he hopes to further chop that. Operating the biggest country in Central America with the smallest budget, Somoza is stretching government money as far as it will go for roads, schools, agriculture and social security.

Do not expect a hurry-up, make-over job on undeveloped Nicaragua. After all, a four-million dollar budget can be stretched only so far. But believers in Somoza believe also that better days are ahead for Nicaragua.

Nicaragua At A Glance

Size: Estimates vary from 49,000 to 57,000 square miles. Size of Florida or Wisconsin.

People: 1,375,000. White, Indian and mixtures of the two.

Capital: Managua. Population, 70,000.

Sells: Gold, coffee, bananas, timber.

Buys: Manufactured goods of all kinds.

Industry: This country is largely agricultural. Most of the people live by subsistence agriculture.

Nicaragua is typical of these nations whose wealth lies largely in agriculture, where the farming methods are primitive, and the land is largely undeveloped.

Banana Land in Honduras

IF Daniel Boone could be turned loose in the mountains of Honduras today, he'd probably hotfoot it back to his kinfolk with tall tales of an undeveloped frontier country waiting for the pioneer. Discovered by Columbus in 1502, Honduras was explored and settled soon after by the Spaniards who converted and enslaved the Indians. Four hundred years hasn't changed Honduras much.

A million white, Indian, Negro and mestizo citizens now call Honduras home. United States capital digs gold and silver and runs the big plantations, while bananas provide cash for the modest needs of a modest government. Poor and illiterate citizens scratch a bare living from the soil. But, on the whole, Honduras remains a virgin land the size of Pennsylvania, with fertile valleys unturned by plow, fine timber untouched by axe, and mountains rich in unexploited minerals.

"We have no national spirit, no patriotism, no unity in Honduras," sadly confessed a young Honduranian official.

Honduras has the best claim to the title "Banana Republic"—this yellow fruit makes up two-thirds of her total exports. Before the dread sigatoka struck along the Caribbean coast, she had some of the best banana plantations in the Americas, as well as a transportation network that has made this section a real garden spot. However, with the exception of these few thousand acres, several small cities and two sizable mines, this is a nation of subsistence farmers.

Farms are small, land is cheap and farmers need pay no taxes. (Of course, few of these tax-free farmers live within a day's donkey ride of a road or school.) Their most important crop is corn because this grain makes up half of their diet. On level ground, corn is planted in furrows laid out with oxen and

a wooden stick, flatteringly called a plow. On the hillsides, where the timber has been slashed and burned, a sharpened stick makes a hole in the ground to receive the hand-dropped seed. These families also raise some beans and a few stalks of bananas to eat, and maybe a little coffee to sell. A pig and some chickens run around (and into) the house, and cattle roam where they please.

A typical farm home I visited had floors of dirt, hard packed and neatly swept. It is astonishing how neat a dirt floor can be. In one corner stood the kitchen range, a mud-plastered affair with different holes for the pots and pans. Long poles of firewood are poked in the open end. There was no chimney; smoke found its way out through cracks in the walls, big enough for a sparrow to fly through. Long strips of meat hung from the ceiling and gourd utensils covered the wall.



Wooden Plow Agriculture. This wooden plow, the same the Egyptians used a thousand years ago, except for the iron point, is widely used throughout Latin America. Pulled by a yoke of oxen, it is used both to break the land and also for cultivation. Soil erosion experts fear that adoption of the steel plow will increase erosion tremendously.



Honduras Cook Stove. The average cook stove is more like a furnace. It is plastered with mud, and has open holes for the cooking pots. No chimney means smoked-up walls. Utensils are made of clay and gourds.

In the other room of this hut were the beds, hand-twisted strings interlaced to serve as springs. A ladder led to the loft where the farmer kept his corn; and in one corner stood the inevitable home altar with crucifix and burning candles. Walls were papered with a helter-skelter arrangement of pictures—Clark Gable and the Saints were surrounded by pages from the lingerie section of a catalog.

The housewife was making tortillas, those flapjack affairs that are bread-and-potatoes in many Latin American countries. Shelled corn is soaked all night in lime water to remove the skins, then crushed with a stone rolling pin on the *metate* or stone bread board. This dough is patted into the form of a pancake and baked. The tortilla is more than bread; it serves as a dish—you pile food on it and eat "dish" and all. Or you use it as a spoon to carry bites of beans and rice to your mouth; and in some circles it serves also as a food-pusher.

The kindly housewife invited us to dinner. Beans, rice, tortillas and tamales was the menu of the day. The black beans were mashed, and the tamales were made of corn, rice and meat wrapped in banana leaves and steamed. Every few minutes the barefoot hostess would come paddling in from the kitchen, dealing out the tortillas from her hands as a dealer deals out cards. Water was passed around in a gourd. And we topped off the meal with cakes made of corn flour and clabber milk, baked in the outside mud oven.

My grade school geography spoke firmly of the Central American countries as the "Banana Republics." I half expected to see bananas substituting for baby soothers, playground slides paved with banana peelings, packages wrapped in banana leaves and banana shade trees in the public plazas. It was with amazement that I listened to a Costa Rican father: "My kids don't like bananas. But my hogs really go for them."



No Thermostat Control Here. This typical mud oven, used in most Latin American countries, turns out some mighty tasty eating. I had some of these cakes made from corn flour and clabber milk, and I came back for more. You have to watch out for an ash now and then because the fire is built inside the oven to heat it up.



Banana Gold. Honduras has the best claim to being a "Banana Republic". But a leaf disease has literally wiped out banana plantations along the Caribbean coast. Bananas have been big business, dominated by the United Fruit Company which owned plantations, hospitals, and ships. However, there is a trend now for private landowners to grow bananas and sell them to the company.

Bananas are important, but hardly as important as coffee to these Central American republics for two reasons: Dollar exports of coffee are much greater than bananas for these countries as a whole; and coffee plantations are home-owned, while the United Fruit Company controls most of the banana plantations.¹

Bananas were imported into the New World 400 years ago by a Spanish priest who planted some in Panama in 1516. Other missionaries brought bananas to plant, too, and soon they spread to every native's back yard from Mexico to Paraguay. Although the fruit has served as food for Central America and furnished leaves for wrapping paper for four centuries, it has only been in the last 50 years that we have seen bananas hanging in our grocery stores.

The United Fruit Company pioneered this industry, whacking plantations out of the wilderness and constructing roads

¹ New trend is for small farmers to raise bananas and sell them to the fruit company. In several countries small producers now grow half of the bananas exported.

and railroads to carry the bananas to port. The company built port cities and hospitals and made the jungles a healthful place to work. It built steamships to carry the fruits to market. And finally it promoted and advertised the food qualities of these yellow fruits to make us the biggest banana buyers in the world. Although this company has plantations in nearly a dozen countries, a good share of its holdings has long been in Honduras. The United Fruit Company is almost as important in this country as the government; it owns railroads, land, newspapers—and has even made up deficits when the government was short of cash.

Honduras, once the world's leading exporter of bananas, has been hard hit by sigatoka, a leaf disease that has literally wiped out banana plantations all along the Caribbean coast. From 1932 to 1938, exports dropped from 31 to nine million bunches; acreage declined by half as plantations had to be abandoned. This disease is now controlled by expensive spraying equipment, another big business aspect of the banana industry. New plantations laid out along the Pacific coast boosted production to 11 million bunches in 1940. Latest disaster to threaten the banana business is lack of ships to carry the bananas to the United States. In recent months many bananas and much money have been lost to these Central American countries because of war shipping demands. When a banana is ready to be picked, it must be picked.

Do not envy these natives their "tree-ripened bananas." There is no such thing. Even natives of these countries pick the bunches green and hang them in the shade of their thatched hut to ripen. They know that if the bunch is not taken from the tree the skin bursts open and the pulp becomes about as tasty as corn meal. Bananas you buy in Omaha and Indianapolis are even better than those the Hondurans pick. Controlled ripening temperatures bring out the best that is in a banana. All the Hondurans have is the temperatures nature has given them, while our bananas have the benefit of refrigerated ships and air-conditioned warehouses.

Botanically speaking, there are hundreds of varieties of bananas. But as far as I was concerned, there were two kinds: Those you eat raw, and the plantain variety (not really a

banana) that must be cooked. The banana we buy is scientifically known as *musa sapientum* ("Fruit of the Wise Men," if that will make you eat more bananas.) Bananas are sized up by the number of "hands" or clusters per stalk; a nine-hand bunch is a big bunch. Banana lands in full bearing are worth \$100 to \$500 an acre; on good land they bear 12 to 15 years without replanting, 160 bunches to the acre.

It takes about three men to pick bananas. The "cutter" uses a long pole with a special knife to nick the 25 or 30-foot trunk just below the bunch of bananas. As the stem breaks, it is steadied by the pole, and the bunch is lowered to the back of the "backer." The stem is then cut loose, and the "backer" turns the bunch over to the "muleman" who loads it on the mules for transfer to the railroad. The banana stalk is cut to the ground; another sprout soon springs up, and in a little more than a year another stem of bananas is ready for picking.

The United Fruit Company has not been without criticism. Charges of political and economic strangulation, of making and unmaking presidents, have been hurled at it almost as long as there has been a banana business. These charges are not confined to banana companies, but to all foreign capital that seeks to exploit these nations at a get-rich-quick tempo. Here is the way the Honduras Minister of Finance looks at the problem of foreign capital which many of these countries sorely need:

"There are two ways to develop this country. One is to bring in capital and guarantee it. Foreign concerns will develop areas, build roads, pay local wages. But their profits will be funneled back to the United States, as in the case of the fruit companies. They will soon skim all of the cream—we are really selling our capital. The other way is to borrow money and develop these things ourselves with the aid of skilled technicians. We can teach our people how to improve the land and build our country. I want foreign capital to come to Honduras. But I also want to teach our people to be self-reliant. Giving concessions is giving away our wealth," he declared.

The Minister of Finance worked out a plan to reorganize the finances of the country, secure experts and technicians from the United States, borrow some money and develop agri-

culture on a conceived plan. But after much dawdling, it was dropped.

"Agricultural development could be the salvation of this country," the Minister declared. Yet, he pointed out that Honduras can hardly produce its small coffee quota of 20,000 bags, and that rice and beans are imported while fertile ground lies idle. Honduras is a fine country for cattle, but the breeds need much improvement. A rich valley with sufficient water for irrigation is undeveloped, although the Spaniards irrigated it centuries ago.

"We need capital, and we need technicians to show us how to spend it advantageously," he asserted. But he was pessimistic as to when Honduras would "wake up."

Mahogany, the timber king of the tropics, has a home in Honduras and other countries from Mexico to Colombia; true mahogany is grown only in these latitudes. Farmers who farm by the moon have some cousins in Honduras—there they cut mahogany literally in the light of the moon. Paths have to be hacked from tree to tree and oxen haul the logs to the nearest stream. Since the mahogany tree does not grow in groves it is extremely hard to exploit without adequate transportation facilities.

Mahogany huts? No, the average Hondurian feels this wood is too heavy to be worth the effort. Bamboo and banana leaves furnish all the shelter needed, and when a few pots of wild orchids are hung from the roof, the huts really look quite cozy.

Poor transportation, revolutions, illiteracy, lack of unity and small budgets have conspired to hold back progress in Honduras. Many of the Indians still speak their own dialects. A \$250,000 budget to provide learning for a million people is one explanation of the high illiteracy. (Honduras spends 25 cents per person yearly on schools; Chicago, \$20 each.) Higher education is well advanced with colleges of law, pharmacy, medicine and engineering—it is the primary schools that are lacking. However, some schools are now being built and educational missions are being sent into the rural areas.

In the entire country there are only 590 miles of all-weather roads and 1,600 autos, trucks and buses to run on them. Tegucigalpa is one of the few world capitals without a



Human Freighters. These men carry huge loads of goods 20 to 30 miles a day, sleep out at night. Because of lack of transportation, mules and men carry more goods than trucks. The airplane has accomplished wonders, however, and one of the first air freight lines in the world was developed in Honduras.

railroad. But work is now underway on a network of roads to tap the more productive areas. Honduras does have one of the few coast-to-coast highways south of the Rio Grande.

However, the airplane receives the bouquets for getting people places in Honduras, and many other Central American countries. Pan American Airways' silvery fleet of transports provides an indispensable link between the capitals of all these republics. Then there is the TACA service, founded on a shoestring by Lowell Yerex, a New Zealander, that carried more freight in 1941 than any airline in the world.² It whisks purebred bulls through the air to isolated haciendas. Tractors are set down in valleys, unreachable except by donkeys—and planes. Mining machinery is flown into remote mountains, piece by piece. Chickens and pigs are sometimes interspersed with the mail and passengers. Many people throughout Cen-

² Competition has been keen between TACA (Transportes Aereos Centroamericanos) and Pan American Airways. It is even keener now that TACA belongs to American Export Lines.

tral America, who have never ridden in an auto, have ridden in old tri-motored Ford planes.

A notable absence of revolutions has characterized the administration of President-Doctor-General Tiburcio Carias Andino. President since 1933, Carias recently extended his term to 1949 with a stroke of the pen. But even his opponents admit he has a stable government.

"People won't raise cattle or build new buildings when there is fear of a revolution," one official told me. "Revolutionists shoot cattle for food, overrun crops, and destroy things in general." So the construction now going on in Honduras means the people have confidence. Critics of Carias say he is an old fogey—that if he were president another 100 years, Honduras would be another century behind. But friends say he has not borrowed money to develop the country because he knew most of it would go into politicians' pockets.

The Chief Protocol took me over to the presidential palace to see *El Presidente*. White uniformed guards with bayonets



I Shake Hands with El Presidente. "The path of Honduras must always lie along the path taken by the United States," President Carias told me. His critics say he is an old fogey. His friends say he has maintained order.



Traffic Jam in Tegucigalpa. All traffic must wait while this oxcart unloads in one of the main streets of the capital of Honduras. My hotel, "the best in town," was only a few steps away on this street. There has been much building and modernization recently, "a sign of a stable government," I was told.

removed the padlock from the iron doors to let us in. The President, a massive 250-pound Indian, said "Mucho gusto!"—and gave me a pulverizing handshake. "The path of Honduras must always lie along the path taken by the United States," this handsome supporter of Uncle Sam told me. "Our foreign policy is the foreign policy of the United States."

Uncle Sam has a firm foothold in Honduras. We buy about 95 per cent of her exports, most of which were produced by U. S. capital, and sell her two-thirds of her needs. We are now cooperating on a rubber project in Honduras that was originally started by the United Fruit Company. We have advanced funds for the Pan American Highway.³ But most Hondurans

³Honduras welcomes the aid on the Pan American Highway but is disappointed that the highway will cut across an 80-mile corner of the country. This mileage will be the shortest in any Central American country, and Tegucigalpa will be the only capital missed.

would like to see more foreign capital, more technicians and "more white immigrants who are willing to work."

My arrival in the capital of Honduras brought forth a two-column story in the paper, largely, I suspect, because headline type cannot be squeezed: "PERIODISTA NORTEAMERICANO EN TEGUCIGALPA." After the steam bath heat of Nicaragua, the higher altitudes of Honduras are as refreshing as a swim after a day's threshing. At the "best hotel in town," I found the sole room with bath was always spoken for a month in advance. I took a room with a pitcher of water on a washstand, hung my coat on a ten-penny nail and sat down on the bed to see if the slats had any spring. "My, how these mosquitoes bite!" I later exclaimed to another hotel guest.

"Mosquitoes? Those aren't mosquitoes," he replied. "They are fleas."

Fifth columnists? Nazi penetration? My information on that came from General Benjamin Henríquez, a leathery brown Indian who eats lunch with the President every day. I went to ask the General about roads (he is superintendent of roads), but he dominated the interview. "Write something so people will know it is safe to come to Honduras," he begged, and he told of the California mine owner who came to Honduras with two gun-carrying bodyguards. Then he disclosed his fear of the Fifth Column—in the United States.

"The people of America don't realize the danger of totalitarianism! They don't realize the brutality of an oppressive force," he asserted. "Here in Honduras, where we have had many revolutions, we know what oppression is. Strikers in war industries should be lined up and shot—that's sabotage; and every strike is an Axis victory," he declared with heat and accompanying gestures that emphasized his earnestness in this interview during the summer of 1941.

The General recalled a visit that Sumner Welles made to Honduras in 1923 to advance Uncle Sam's ideas about a presidential squabble. "I asked Mr. Welles, 'In the States, do boys make love to girls by slapping them and boxing their ears?' I told him that Uncle Sam was trying to woo the Central American countries in that manner. And I told him while the United States could force its will on Honduras, it would be a



He Told Sumner Welles. General Henriquez begged me to tell U. S. citizens that they didn't need a bodyguard when they came to Honduras. He once gave Sumner Welles some advice, too, on how Uncle Sam should treat his neighbors to the South.

blot on the United States as well as on the personal career of Mr. Welles. 'If you acquit yourself here as a statesman, you may go ahead to be Secretary of State', he advised Sumner Welles just 19 years ago.

General Henríquez had something to say about President Franklin D. Roosevelt, too: "I hope you Americans learn to appreciate Roosevelt as we have in Central and South America, and may God grant that his successor will have as much foresight and brains. (I'm judging him on his foreign policy, not his domestic policy about which I know nothing.) If another 20 years follows like the past 10, there will be a real basis for understanding between the United States and Latin America. If the 'Big Stick' policy had continued, it would have driven Latin American people into the hands of the Axis," the General concluded.

Shortly after the Pearl Harbor attack, Honduras declared war on the Axis. The Good Neighbor Policy is paying dividends!

Honduras At A Glance

Size: 46,000 square miles. About the size of Pennsylvania.

People: 1 million. White, Indian, Negro and mestizos.

Capital: Tegucigalpa. Population 40,000.

Sells: Bananas, gold and silver, coffee, coconuts.

Buys: Manufactured goods of all kinds.

Industry: There is a little mining. No heavy industry. Most of the people are subsistence farmers.

Honduras is one of the least developed countries in the Americas. Her soil is unturned, her minerals unexploited, her timber untouched by axe. Biggest problem is lack of transportation.

Tiny El Salvador Works

EL SALVADOR stands out in roadless, undeveloped and dependent Central America. This nation's roads and public improvements are the best. Land is cultivated to the last square foot. Salvadorian cities have their sophisticated sets, the government has a balanced budget. Dictator Martínez believes in democracy, frowns on foreign loans, has boldly told Axis agents where to get off, and asks no advice on how to run his country.

Yet El Salvador (The Savior) is the tiniest nation on the American mainland. Texas alone would make 19 El Salvadors; Brazil is 248 times bigger.

You can see the difference from the air—neglected valleys of down-at-the-heel Honduras abruptly give way to the carefully groomed hillsides of teeming El Salvador. Teeming is only mildly descriptive for this most densely populated country on the American mainland. Unlike many of the "empty" republics, its population of 1,750,000¹ flows into every nook and cranny of this mountainous country; even the steep slopes of smoking volcanoes are utilized by machete farmers who raise coffee for the outside world.

As far as exports are concerned, El Salvador has one of the best claims in the world to being a "one-crop country"—coffee makes up 90 per cent of her total exports. With the \$10,000,000 she receives for her coffee, she buys clothes and tools, machinery and medicine, gasoline and radios, wheat and whiskey. She is dependent on outside sources for these products.

¹ Salvadoreans are white, Indian and *ladino* (Indian-white mixture). However, these groups have been assimilated into the national life of the country, unlike neighboring Honduras and Guatemala.



Rancho in El Salvador. A rancho like this costs about \$14. It is a one-room affair which houses the entire family. Two-thirds of the people live outside cities in huts like these, growing corn and beans to eat and coffee to sell. The women in this picture have water gourds balanced on their heads.

Like so many other Latin American countries, El Salvador has no iron, coal, oil or other minerals essential to industry; her manufacturing is limited to processing products of the soil. With the money she collects from import and export duties, she runs her government. The U. S. coffee drinker means a great deal to El Salvador.

Two-thirds of the people live outside the hustling cities, growing corn and beans to eat and coffee to sell. Although it is estimated there are about 70,000 landowners in El Salvador, large farms—a hang-over of Spanish grant days—still predominate. Many absentee owners are lawyers or government officials who live in San Salvador, the capital, and leave the farming to an administrator and peons who have lived on the land for generations. Aside from coffee culture which is quite

advanced, farming is the old story of wooden plows, oxcarts and machetes. Not more than two dozen tractors are at work on farms in all El Salvador. Imported gasoline at 45 cents a gallon is one reason why oxen are more popular.

Workers on these farms live in *ranchos*, a dignified name for huts walled with mud, floored with dirt, capped with straw and open on one side to the family and the family's pigs and chickens. These houses cost \$14—I priced one. The peon works for the landowner or rents a little piece of ground on shares. Haciendas provide each worker with a meal ticket allowance of corn and beans, plus cash wages for the days he works. On a typical hacienda owned by a cabinet minister, the daily ration is $1\frac{1}{2}$ pounds of corn and $\frac{1}{2}$ pound of beans per workman; the wages are 20 cents a day.



Country Shoppers. These folks are taking some of their produce to the village market. Sometimes women carry baskets weighing 50 pounds and more, balanced on their heads. They walk as far as 15 miles bare-footed, and seldom touch the basket with their hands.



This Is Henequen. When I saw this field I wondered why they were planting cactus in rows. I found out it was henequen, being grown for its fiber. The long leaves are cut off a few at a time and taken to a mill where the outside pulp is removed.

Salvadorians put in a real day's work, too. I was told in Honduras: "When we want industrious workers, we import Salvadorians."

Revolution came to El Salvador in 1931 when the landless peons struck for land. "Communist-inspired," some people said and tried to lay the blame on Mexican agitators. *Norteamericanos* have often smiled smugly at the frequent "revolutions" in Latin America and remarked flippantly that "those people will never learn how to govern themselves." Yet most of these revolts are against the same things that caused our colonial forefathers to object in 1776. The colonists revolted because they thought the British were too domineering, taxing them without giving them the right to vote. And we hold sacred the thrilling story of their battle against odds that gave us our free United States of America.

But landless peons in many Latin American countries have also been oppressed by selfish landlords, grafting governments

and a dominating Church. Their "revolutions" that we have ridiculed are manifestations that the underdog—frequently he is in the majority—wants land, schools, the right to make a decent living, and the right to have a vote.

El Salvador's 1931 uprising was ruthlessly suppressed by the landowners with a loss of nearly 10,000 lives, but it bore fruit in the formation of the "*Mejoramiento Social*" (Social Betterment), whose whole purpose is a more equitable distribution of the land. This government institution buys up big farms, divides them into ten-acre patches and sells them to the peons on easy terms. However, land reform has been slow, and many Salvadoreans still toil vigorously for starvation wages.

Eleven thousand growers raise 850,000 bags of coffee annually to place this little country third only to Brazil and Colombia in world coffee production. It is an ideal crop for El Salvador's steep hillsides since the bushes and shade trees help prevent erosion.² Coffee farms average about 50 acres each. All growers from the half-acre farmer to the 5,000-acre landlord pay 10 cents for each bag of coffee sold into a fund to maintain the best agricultural experiment station in Central America, where experts study shade, moisture, fertilizer and all phases of coffee production. If a coffee grower has a problem or a question, they find the answer for him.

Although coffee is the cash crop, twice as much land is planted to corn. The average diet of the people is made up largely of *tortillas*, *tamales*, cornbread, and corn on the cob, plus the usual rice and beans. Corn is cribbed right on the stalk; each stalk is broken below the ear, and the ear hangs encased in its husks until it is needed.³ To shell their corn, farmers place it in a net rope hammock with blankets spread below; then whale the daylight out of it with sticks until the cobs give up their grain.

² Erosion is a big problem because of the heavy rains. In 1932, 24 inches of rain fell in one day, causing minor landslides all over El Salvador.

³ One planter told me hybrid corn is no good because hybrid corn has thin husks that leave the ear exposed to the rain. Cribbing corn on the stalks calls for snug husks.



Binder-Twine Fiber. The raw henequen fiber is hung out to dry and is then combed and made into bags and ropes. All of the binder twine used in this country comes from Mexico and Central America. El Salvador is now using its fiber to make sacks for her coffee.

The enterprise of these people is amazing. Because of the dense population and scarcity of land, they cultivate slopes so steep they must be "human flies" to avoid falling from their cornfields. Seeing two workmen cutting weeds out of corn on an impossibly steep hillside, up that hillside I crawled, my camera slung on my back. I really needed those climbing spurs which telephone linemen use to shinny up poles, but I managed to get within shooting distance of these fellows who were patiently cultivating the corn with machetes.

Then, as I balanced myself on one knee and braced myself with the other foot to take a picture, I slipped and rolled head over heels down the hill. (You should have heard the editor yell when I put on my expense account: "Camera repairs; damaged when I fell out of cornfield.")

Vigorous attempts are being made to diversify El Salvador's crops. Cotton, for example. She has set a goal of self-sufficiency in this fiber that in 1938 made up 16.5 per cent of her imports. In 1933, there were only 10 cotton planters in the country; in 1939, the number had increased to 276 and El Salvador now produces more cotton than any of the Central American nations.

When I first saw fields of henequen I asked why they planted "all that cactus in rows." This binder twine plant provides enough fiber to sack all of their coffee. Livestock is being improved through importation of purebred sires which the government lends out free. On one hacienda I saw native cattle being crossed with a Zebu bull, the big humpbacked animal that I have seen wandering about the streets of Calcutta, India. These bulls are sacred to the Indian Hindus, but their main talking point in El Salvador is that ticks do not bother them.

A Wisconsin dairyman would get kicked all over the lot if he did not know the special technique of coaxing milk from El Salvador cows. I saw a farmer turn a calf to the cow. As the calf took those first furious gulps, he caught the calf, put a rope around its neck and tied it to the front leg of its mother. And then as the calf bawled, he milked the cow. I asked him the reason for all of this monkey business.



To Keep from Getting Kicked. To milk a cow, the farmer in El Salvador first ties the calf to the mother's front leg. That's the only way she'll give down her milk—so I was told. This is a common practice in other countries I visited.

"I must coax her," he replied. "Unless her calf is tied to her front leg, the cow absolutely will not let her milk down."

It is hard to prevent things from growing in this sunny land. "If I leave my land lie idle for one year, it becomes a thicket of brush. If I leave it go two years without plowing, I'm lost," one lowland farmer told me. Even his fences literally grew—*tempate* stakes stuck in the ground sprout quickly to form an impenetrable hedge fence, and also provide an oil-bearing seed.

Most important forest product is the so-called "Balsam of Peru," a medicinal gum that grows nowhere in the world except in El Salvador. It received this name during colonial days when trade had to be routed through Peru to Spain. Most interesting tree is the birch from which parents get switches to punish bad children; it is appropriately known as *quita calzon*—literally translated, that means "Remove trousers."

"I'll drive you up to Guatemala," offered my friend Rafael Reyes. His offer sounds commonplace here at home; but in Latin America it was more amazing than if Rafael had said, "We'll get up a safari, some native carriers, and make a foray through the jungle." El Salvador is one of the few countries in Latin America where you can drive or take a train from one country to the next. This little country has a road network of 3,691 miles, half of them improved.

They have done it on their own, too, even refusing United States aid in constructing their section of the Pan American Highway. In spite of 45-cent gasoline, more than 3,500 autos travel these roads. Buses will pick you up any place along the highway, and if you have chickens or a pig, you bring them along without paying extra. I hitched a ride with an oxcart driver on this highway, riding while he walked. When an oxcart ventures on these hard surfaced roads, the driver by law must walk at the head of his oxen to keep them from wandering all over the road.

San Salvador,⁴ the hustling capital city of 100,000 fun-loving people, has wide boulevards, beautiful plazas and elaborate suburban villas. The upper class has its Country Club and cocktail bars and the race track is a favorite meeting place for the sporty crowds. Favorite bathing resort is at nearby Lake Ilopango into which Indians used to toss their four most beautiful virgins, in order that the gods might favor them with a good corn crop. Parks are well filled with flowers, lottery salesmen and shoeshine boys. Climate is made-to-order. From May to October it is the rainy season, "winter" they call it. And the rest of the year it is summer, although the temperature remains the same, January and June.

Salvadorian cities are exciting, but a jaunt into the rural areas is more fascinating. A few of the things I saw: Bare-foot women, with 50-pound loads of fruit and other produce balanced on their heads, walking 10 miles over steep paths to market . . . Men making tile for those red roofs out of plain mud—they mix it in the best accepted mud-pie manner, only on a bigger scale, drying the tile in the sun, and burning them

⁴ San Salvador is the capital city; El Salvador, the name of the country. You offend its citizens if you forget the "El."

red . . . Convicts in red and white stripes working on the road, their bare legs chained together . . . Pigs driven to market with strings tied to a hind leg . . . Brown sugar wrapped in corn shucks . . . Women stripped to the waist, a small hand-rolled cigar in their mouths, doing the family washing at the creek. Rocks serve as their washboards and they bathe their babies by dousing them with gourds full of water.

I would have made a swell Pied Piper. As I roamed in the rural areas, kids of all ages usually tagged along, volunteering as photographic models. I stopped once to take a picture of four schoolboys just as school let out. Before I could get my camera adjusted, there were 75 children all crowding to get into the front row of the picture.

President Martínez took over the reins of government in 1931 and has since changed the one-term provision of the constitution to prolong his job until at least 1944. He is a thor-



Mud Makes Pretty Tile. Anyone can afford a bright tile roof. I saw this man mix up a good batch of mud. Then he molded it over a curved board and put the tile out in the sun to dry. After drying, he will put them in a crude kiln and burn them red.

ough dictator, and a constitutional provision requiring men to vote is so much window dressing. But even his opponents concede that he is thoroughly honest and has given El Salvador a good administration.

Although the army gets a huge slice of the eight million dollar budget, public works, agriculture and education have not been neglected. The president's pride lies in banks (they are very sound); schools (good, what there are of them); and roads (best in Central America). And despite his dictatorial powers, Martínez is definitely pro-democratic and pro-Uncle Sam. We bought 75 per cent of El Salvador's exports in 1940 and supplied 80 per cent of her imports.

El Salvador is a mite of a nation, but her industry and progress permit her to proudly fly her flag alongside other sovereign nations of the world, including the United States—227 times bigger.

El Salvador At A Glance

Size: 13,000 square miles. Brazil is 248 times bigger.

People: 1,750,000. Mostly mestizo.

Capital: San Salvador. Population 102,000.

Sells: Coffee makes up 90 per cent of her total exports. Gold, sugar, henequen, balsam.

Buys: Machinery and manufactured goods of all kinds.

Industry: Manufacturing is limited to processing products of the soil. Agriculture is fairly well developed with emphasis on coffee. Most of the people make their living from the soil.

This is a one-crop country as far as exports are concerned. Unlike most Latin American republics, this country is all carefully cultivated. Its people are hard working.

Colorful Guatemala

“THE barefoot Indian held out a bouquet of gorgeous orchids. He named his price, but in true bargaining spirit I disinterestedly ambled over to hear another Indian coaxing music from a gourd marimba. The orchid salesman followed and lowered his price. However, I suddenly became interested in the cotton spinning activities of a squatting woman, a baby tied on her back. She was wearing homespun garments—identical to richly colored fabrics I had seen displayed in Chicago’s most exclusive department store. The persistent man with the bouquet finally cut his price in half so I bought the bunch of orchids. I didn’t know what to do with them, but I just couldn’t pass up that bargain of 50 orchids for five cents. . . .”

This entry from my Guatemala journal throws some light on why writers go into circus superlatives in labeling Guatemala the most colorful country in Latin America, a “must” for anyone who visits our American neighbors.

Liberally sprinkled with volcanoes and lying immediately south of the Mexican border, Guatemala is a mountainous country about the size of Mississippi.¹ It is the birthplace of corn and the home of chewing gum—an agricultural nation whose cash products are coffee and bananas. An honest but absolute dictator is boss of its 3½ million citizens, most of whom are pure-blooded Indians.² The story of Guatemala is the story of these Indians who cling to the customs, dress and

¹ Exact size of Guatemala is in doubt because of the century-old dispute over British Honduras which Guatemala believes belongs to her. President Ubico has dropped the matter temporarily “because of the fact that Great Britain is at war and especially because of the cause it is defending.”

² Guatemala has never had much immigration. Official estimates say two-thirds of the people are pure-blooded Indians, while the remaining third is of mixed Spanish and Indian blood.

beliefs of centuries past as President Ubico works furiously to streamline and modernize what is already the most powerful republic in Central America.

President Ubico has accomplished a great deal since he became president-dictator. He has built roads and schools, balanced the budget, and made Guatemala City so clean you no more think of dropping a cigarette butt on Main Street than you would on Emily Post's front room rug. Such modernistic touches as Ubico, dashing madly through the country on a motorcycle, somehow seems out of place in this land where Indians have their roots deep in the culture of pre-Columbus days. In no other American nation are the aborigines so unchanged as in Guatemala.

No ordinary redskins with feathers and tomahawks, Guatemalans are the offspring of the famous Mayas. Archaeol-



Guatemala Is Indian Country. Two-thirds of the people are pure-blooded Indians while the rest are of mixed blood. Although Spanish is the official language, these folks cling to their centuries-old customs and languages. They care little about what's going on in the capital.



Masks for Fiesta. The Indians have never forgotten the cruel blonde Spaniards who conquered and enslaved them. They act out the Spanish conquest in pageants, using wooden masks such as these children are wearing. The boy on the right has the mask of a bearded Spanish warrior; the girl has on the mask of the Indian maiden who is wronged; and the little one wears the bull mask of the bull fight.

ogists—those experts who can dig up a stone hatchet and discern whether or not its original owner had whiskers—tell us that the Mayas developed the most famous civilization in the New World in northern Guatemala and southern Mexico. It was they who gave corn to the world. They built magnificent buildings with bathtub conveniences, had a calendar more accurate than ours. Their hieroglyphics were supposed to be the foremost intellectual achievement of ancient America, and they had a system of arithmetic centuries before the average fellow in Europe knew that two plus two was four. These were the forefathers of most present day Guatemalans.

Once you venture beyond the city limits of spic-and-span Guatemala City, you know this land still belongs to the Indians. Roads are alive with their colorful figures carrying their goods to market. Women with babies riding in a sling on their backs, balance 40-pound baskets of fruit, grain and chickens on their heads. What looks like a shock of fodder



Trading Center. The shopkeeper on the left is selling cakes of brown sugar. He will wrap your purchase in palm leaves or corn shucks. On the right is the water jug department. These women carry children and produce in the cloths slung on their backs.

moving mysteriously down the road turns out to have the legs of a man. On steep hillside patches, men with checkered skirts and mammoth hoes cultivate the corn and coffee that is the wealth of Guatemala.

Nine-tenths of the people live directly from the land, building their own homes, raising their food and weaving their clothing.

Before a little thatched hut high in the mountains, smoke oozing through its straw roof, I stopped to take a picture. At sight of my camera a couple of youngsters scampered for cover like rabbits before the approach of a hound. The mother abruptly stopped grinding corn and older daughters hurriedly left their weaving to run into the house. Only with difficulty and the assistance of an interpreter did we coax our way within conversational range to find they spoke no Spanish. As is so common among the isolated Indians, they spoke only an old Maya dialect. Although the Indians of Guatemala differ in customs and costumes from one valley to the next, this was a typical family, and a most fascinating one.

Their one-room hut was built of wood, corn stalks and straw. From a hacked hillside clearing they get most of their

food—corn, beans and sweet potatoes. As in most of the other Latin American countries, corn is on their table three times daily. Before daylight the woman of the household is up grinding corn between stones for her husband's breakfast of *tortillas*, beans, and *atol*, a thick corn soup. Corn is also made into bread and *aquardiente*, the hard liquor that makes market day such fun.

The Guatemalan farmer knows his corn culture—he uses methods handed down by ancestors who developed this important cereal from the tall *teosinte* grass that grew in the temperate valleys of Guatemala centuries ago. Half of the nation's cultivated area is in corn, all of it planted by hand and cultivated with a huge hoe. Incidentally, a big landowner had a lot of fun telling me about the *gringo* from our country who came down to Guatemala to show the natives how to grow corn.

"He did things in the big American way—a shiny new green tractor, disks, mechanical planters and selected seed," the landowner recalled. "He plowed the land, disked it and made a seed bed—'the perfect mulch' he called it. Indians on nearby farms were sure the *gringo* would fail, and warned him that the rains were pretty heavy. But the *gringo* said his 'perfect mulch' would absorb anything. Well, his corn came up and he started cultivating it. Then came a six-inch shower, and the dirt was washed away by the yard. That didn't help the land—nor the corn. Then the rest of the corn grew to tremendous height and stayed green so long that he couldn't plant a second crop as we do. That was the most expensive corn we ever raised down here," he concluded. Moral: Yankee methods don't always work in Latin America.

But back to this family I was visiting. Although the parents cannot read or write and the children have never been to school,³ a glance at their homespun clothing proves they are not uncultured. They hoe corn and go about their everyday work wearing colorful garments—garments made from the same high-priced fabrics I've seen displayed in Marshall Field's Chicago store windows. The manner in which these

³ Illiteracy is estimated as high as 80%. In the rural areas they sometimes have to literally run down boys to put them in school. Few parents want to send girls to school.

stolid-faced mountain women transform raw cotton and wool into clothing would excite the admiration of a Schiaparelli.

After removing the seeds and fluffing the cotton (or wool), the daughters of the household spin it into thread. Their equipment: a pencil-sized stick that is rested in a gourd and spun



Weaving Colorful Fabrics. On crude looms like this, these simple people weave some of the most gorgeous fabrics I have ever seen. I have seen displays of goods in Chicago's most exclusive department store windows, exactly the same type as farm women wear while hoeing corn in Guatemala.

with the fingers as you would spin a top. The fiber is started on the spindle and winds up to form a lumpy thread.

Then on a crude hand loom, one end tied to a post and the other around the weaver's waist, these women fashion some of the most gorgeous fabrics I have ever seen. Formerly, dyes were made from roots, clay, insects and other materials of nature, while fabrics were washed in hot springs to make the color fast. But now they have gone modern; they buy U. S. and German dyes.

Style? Their clothes are just about made when they come off the loom. Most elaborate garment is the waist worn by women, a square piece of material with a hole in the middle. The wearer slips it over her head and binds it about her waist, leaving a big underarm hole through which the baby gets his dinner. Her skirt is another length of material draped over the hips in a lap-over fashion and tucked in about the waist. A folded piece of material serves as a hat—also a basket cloth on which to balance heavy loads. And there's the ever present sling on their backs for carrying produce and/or babies.

Men wear pants that any woman would call cute; they are tight fitting and reach just below the knees. Their tight coats of stiff dark materials are embroidered with rising suns and other symbols of their religion. At the village markets, you can easily spot any stranger since dress and dialect varies from one mountain valley to the next.

These Indians are industrious people, working from daylight to dark. Women are slaves of their husbands, although few ever go through the formality of a marriage ceremony.⁴ Girls start weaving when they are six or seven and boys soon learn to swing a hoe or carry loads like their fathers.

One day I saw a little boy about ten years old walking along the road with a heavy load of wood bending his back almost double. He was so small and his load so big, that I almost wished I were in the market for firewood. He was headed for the village market five miles away where he would

⁴ Some marriages are arranged by a "go-between." The bridegroom pays his prospective father-in-law as much as \$20 cash, a couple of pigs, some corn and chickens for his daughter.

sell the firewood which his father had cut. His price—five cents!

The only letup in this dawn-to-dusk work routine comes on Sunday—market day for the entire family in most Guatemala villages. Roads are clogged for miles around as men, women and children trudge along, leading pigs, carrying corn and other produce that they want to sell or swap for the things they do not grow. Guatemala has one of the best road systems in Latin America and 4,000 automobiles and other vehicles. But most freight moves on the human back.

Carrying heavy loads is the profession of the *cargador*, that traveling merchant who sells his wares at one market, buys another load and carries it to the next market. This one-man freight line transports everything from pottery to coffins, his 125-pound load tied to a wooden frame and bearing down on his shoulders. He covers the ground in a running walk, the



Get Along, Hog! These boys are trying to get this old sow home. Instead of trucking hogs like we do, the farmer ties a string around his pig's neck and leads it to market. Most Latin American people eat little meat—they eat the corn instead of feeding it to livestock.



Hog Market in Guatemala. From miles around, the farmers have led their goats, sheep and pigs to market. While waiting for a buyer to come along, the women spin and weave. There is much bargaining between buyer and seller.

load being eased somewhat by the broad strap pulling against his forehead. He may be days on the road, sleeping by the roadside at night, living on *tortillas*, beans and brown sugar.

In China, I saw a brass band and witch doctors leading a funeral parade with firecrackers popping; I've seen the Taj Mahal by moonlight, and I have been pulled into Egyptian baazars. But for sheer color, nothing I've seen on five continents can compare with the Sunday market in Chichicastenango. It is a combination religious festival, county fair and family reunion. I stayed at a little *pension* where I had three square meals, a room covered with fresh pine needles, and an orchid in the vase by my washbowl—all for two dollars.

The market is a riot of color, sights and people. You see pottery water jugs that have been carried in from a village 50 miles away and brown sugar wrapped in dried palm leaves and sold by the chunk. I heard a concert on a marimba, whose sounding boxes were gourds of different sizes. Nearby was the orchid salesman. (I'll remember that 5-cent orchid bouquet a long time. Three months later I paid \$14 for *two* orchids for

my bride, roughly 7,000 per cent more.) ZZZZZing! Another skyrocket goes up from the church steps.

Women kneel down by their sheep and pigs waiting for a buyer; as they wait, they spin cotton, weave coats from palm leaves, and nurse their babies (many of them old enough to stand up and help themselves.) The Sunday market is for the exchange of goods and gossip. If these hard working folks make enough to buy a little incense for their ancestors, a candle for the church, and some firewater for themselves they are happy.

Sometimes during the crowded forenoon, they pay their respects at the white Catholic church burning incense in a big bonfire for saints and ancestors. They kneel on the steps and pray, as oblivious to the market bedlam as Mohammedans kneeling on a busy street corner. Inside the church they stick lighted candles all over the church floor and sprinkle wild flower petals to form a carpet of blossoms. Religion is a driving force in the life of the Guatemalan Indian, but theirs is a curious mixture of pagan gods and the deity forced on them by the over-zealous Spaniard. As a compromise, they have the images of both in the church. Superstition and homage to the gods of their ancestors still dominate their lives—I heard them beat drums, imploring their rain god to send rains in the right amount for a bountiful corn harvest.

Coffee and bananas are the cash crops of Guatemala, making up more than nine-tenths of her total exports.⁵ Bananas are controlled largely by the United Fruit Company while the 2,000 coffee farms are in the hands of foreigners and Guatemalans with little or no Indian blood. Because so many Indians are almost self sufficient on their own little farms, that brings up the question of who does the work on the banana and coffee plantations. These Indian farmers do it—in their spare time, working for 10 to 15 cents a day.

Before Ubico became president the Indian worker was little more than a slave. Landlords brought Indians to the plantations, "obligated them by enormous fictitious debts, and

⁵ Coffee made up 56% of the 1939 exports; bananas, 32.3%. Coffee has been decreasing in relative importance, and bananas increasing. However, disease has hit banana plantations and in 1940 two destructive "blow-downs" completely destroyed 9,000 acres of bananas.



Colorful Chichicastenango. The Sunday market at Chichicastenango is the most colorful sight I have seen any place in the world. On the steps of this church, the Indians burn incense, pray and shoot skyrockets. (A block away others will be beating drums to bring rain for their crops.) Then they go into the church to spread petals of wild flowers and to light candles.

signed them to a contract while in the midst of their drinking and festivities," according to Dr. Mariano Pacheco Herrate, Director General of Agriculture. "This condition lasted so long that he practically lost the idea of being free."

President Ubico has passed labor laws to protect these workers and also to insure a supply of labor for the big plantations. Now every Indian who cultivates land of his own must work 100 days a year on the big plantations; 150 days, if he has no land. "In this way they will come to see that they are not vagabonds, and will contribute to the progress of the country like all other Guatemalans," declares Dr. Herrate.

Although agriculture is the sole source of wealth in Guatemala, less than six per cent of the land is under cultivation. The government is now striving to increase this acreage by making land grants to small farmers. According to government figures there are "8,985 large national landholders; 758 large foreign landholders; and 90,777 small landholders" in Guatemala. Some of these large landholdings have been di-



Home-Made Music. Favorite musical instrument in Central America is the marimba. This marimba is made from hand-hewn blocks, with different-sized gourds as the sounding boxes. It is surprisingly musical—I got a special tune for five cents.

vided into many small plots, and lent to landless Indians on the condition that they farm the land.

Guatemala gets its name from an Indian word meaning "full of trees." One particular tree yields a white resin called *chicle*, the raw material for our chewing gum. Guatemala produces a quarter of the world's supply. *Chicleros* make zigzag cuts in the trees with their machetes, collect the sap, cook it to taffy hardness, and cool it into blocks. All of these blocks are flown by plane from the thick tropical jungle to the coast where chewing gum manufacturers pay 50 cents a pound for it.

Since much of Guatemala's export wealth is owned by foreigners, the government has tried to stimulate crop diversification. Although locusts have wiped out cotton crops in the past, a new start has been made with this crop and two cotton mills have been established. (Cotton textiles is this country's biggest single import.) Livestock is being improved and the production of potatoes and wheat encouraged. Uncle Sam is also cooperating with Guatemala in rubber and cinchona experiments, strengthening ties that have been forged by trade. In 1940 we furnished 73 per cent of all Guatemalan needs and bought 90.9 per cent of her exports.

President Ubico took over the government in 1931 and has been going at race horse pace ever since, slowing up only long enough to change the constitution so he could remain in office at least another term. He has practically wiped out crime, discouraged graft and embarked on a campaign of building. Not only does he have a balanced budget, he is paying off the national debt. (Critics suggest, but not openly, that the government is sound, while the people are bankrupt.) But Ubico has done many things for his Indian constituents, passing labor laws to safeguard them, giving them land to farm, building schools and roads. In ten years he has begun to make a dent in the ways and customs of ten centuries.

But President Ubico is thinking beyond the borders of Guatemala—he dreams of the day when Central American countries will be united as one nation. That is not a new idea. After the Spaniards were expelled from Central America, all of these countries except Costa Rica attached themselves to

Mexico. But the Mexican Iturbide was no better than a Spanish viceroy, so in 1823 Guatemala took the lead to form these countries into the "United Provinces of the Center of America." That union lasted until 1839, when each of these tiny nations—Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua and Costa Rica—went back to rowing her own ship of state.⁶ Since then there have been no less than half a dozen attempts to set up a federation in Central America, the last attempt being made as late as 1921.

Honduras, Nicaragua and El Salvador were one nation for ten years. Once the Federation was wrecked by Costa Rica's refusal to join. The countries got together again in 1872, but this time Nicaragua held back because of a dispute with Costa Rica. In 1885, President Barrios of Guatemala tried force, but that did not work any better—the other nations united just long enough to invade Guatemala, and kill Barrios. An 1898 union looked as if it might succeed, but revolution in El Salvador broke it up once more.

These failures are variously explained: The peoples were different—Guatemala was Indian, Costa Rica was white, and the others were mestizo. Each nation's leader was willing to declare his country a part of the Federation providing he got the top job. The countries were isolated from each other—as late as 1942 only Guatemala and El Salvador were connected by either road or railroad.

On the other hand, in a world of power politics the pitiful weakness of these tiny nations is apparent. The *combined* area of these six republics is considerably smaller than Texas. Their *combined* population is about equal to New York City and suburbs. Their *combined* governmental budgets—for armies, schools, public welfare and roads—is less than Philadelphia alone spends.

Ubico has been appraised the standout leader in Central America. He has dreams of a strong Guatemala taking the lead in welding the Central American republics into a stronger union. If those dreams are to be realized, he has two big jobs. First, he must make the Indians of Guatemala conscious

⁶ Panama, separated from Colombia in 1903, is now included with the other Latin American republics.

that they are Guatemalans. Secondly, he must wipe away the prejudices and nationalistic feelings of the other Central American republics.

The cards are stacked against him, but if he can successfully do these jobs he will be hailed as another Bolívar.

Guatemala At A Glance

Size: 48,000 square miles. Exact size in doubt due to border dispute with British Honduras.

People: 3½ million. Two-thirds of them are pure blooded Indians. The rest are mestizos.

Capital: Guatemala City. Population, 166,000.

Sells: Coffee, bananas, chicle, gold.

Buys: Machinery and manufactured goods of all kinds.

Industry: Very little manufacturing. The entire economy of the country is based on agriculture.

Guatemala is an Indian country. The majority of the people hold to dress, customs and language of their ancestors. Until they are made Guatemalans, Guatemala can make little progress.

Sugar Cane Makes Cuba

WHEN Columbus first tried to get east by sailing west, he was headed for the East Indies, a land of sugar and spice. But when his lookout yelled "Land Ho!" it wasn't the East Indies he saw. Nor was it the American continent. It was a group of islands only a day's fish journey from Florida. We know them today as the West Indies where Cuba, Haiti and the Dominican Republic have unfurled their national banners.

As I climbed into a plane one zero night in Chicago to start my Good Neighbor visit, the West Indies sounded as mysterious and far away as the Orient, Utopia or Timbaktu. Yet, next morning I was in Cuba, the biggest island of the Indies, saying "Buenos Dias" instead of "Good Morning." Cuba is one of Uncle Sam's closest neighbors—close to us geographically, politically, economically and strategically. (Even though it is only a few miles from Miami, the señoritas must still be chaperoned.)

This long narrow island is about the size of Pennsylvania with a population of more than four million. It is a land of perpetual summer with a white and Negro population.¹ Uncle Sam's money controls most of the business. Cubans play politics for pastime, an ex-sergeant rules, and sugar is the very lifeblood of the country.

Sugar, in ancient days, was a costly medicine and bees made most of our sweetening. Today, Cuba is the biggest sugar exporter in the world, four million tons annually. The prosperity or poverty of this island literally depends upon sugar: More than half of the cultivated land is in sugar cane, and a

¹ Half of Cuba's population is white; a fourth, Negro; and a fourth, mulatto. Negroes and mulattos are wretchedly poor, their numbers declining because of malnutrition and disease. They have no monopoly on poverty, however.



Land of Sugar. A third of the Cuban people depend upon sugar for a living. These men have cut down the 12-foot cane stalks with a machete, trimmed off the leaves, and cut them into short lengths. Now they're loading the cane to haul it to the million-dollar mill. United States corporations own most of Cuba's sugar mills and land.

third of the population depends directly upon the industry for a living. Sugar makes up four-fifths of the total exports, providing cash to buy food, clothing and machinery. Sugar taxes build roads and schools and pay government salaries. From the dizzy days of 1920, when sugar rose to the luxury price of 22½ cents a pound, to the black days of 1932, when it sank to the sickening low of 3½ cents, sugar has been Cuba's wealth and problem.

Jesús Rodríguez told me just how important sugar is to him—and a third of the Cuban people. It was the beginning of the cane cutting season, and Jesús was happy. He whacked away with his machete at the 15-foot cane stalks, some of them almost as thick as his wrists. With swift strokes he flicked off the leaves and cut the stalks in four-foot lengths. Other laborers were cording the cane into huge oxcarts, to be pulled by three yokes of lumbering oxen to the mill five miles away.

Jesús was happy because again he had money, at least a dollar a day cash wages if he worked hard. It had been ten long months since the last cane cutting season had ended, during

which time he had no regular work. He had fed his family the best he could, mainly on yuca, beans and bananas. Now he could buy rice and some meat. Yes, times were prosperous again for Jesús, and would be for at least two months. Then the sugar mills would shut down again and Jesús would have to stop cutting cane. *Tiempo muerto* (dead season), the sugar workers call it.

Not that the cane runs out—some years from one-third to a half of the cane is left standing in the fields. That may sound ironical in wartime sugar rationing days, but Cuba's sugar mills are limited by quotas. The length of the cane cutting season depends entirely upon how much cane Uncle Sam buys from this island nation.

Jesús recalled the prosperous twenties when the United States took one-half of all her sugar from Cuba. Cutting seasons lasted five months then, and he could lay up a little cash surplus for the months when the mills were down. But in 1940 the United States bought only 27 per cent of her sugar needs from Cuba.² That meant Jesús work was cut from five months to two months, his annual wages were only two-fifths as big.

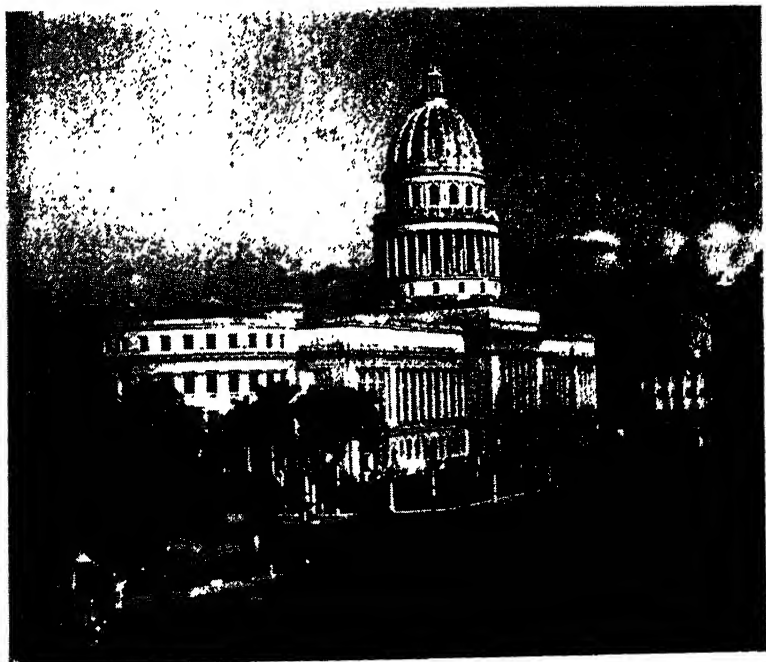
I rode on a cartload of cane to the sugar mill. In the green fields surrounding the mill, little dinky engines were pulling cane by the trainload, dumping it into the gigantic jaws of the sugar *central*. Cuban sugar mills are built on a bit bigger scale than the one-horse mill where we always took our cane to get the winter supply of sorghum molasses. This Cuban mill, employing 600 men, turned out a half million pounds of raw sugar daily. (A by-product, incidentally, is blackstrap molasses, used for making rum and alcohol.) Average value in land and equipment of the 157 Cuban sugar *centrals* in operation in 1940 was between two and three million dollars.

Perhaps that is the reason why sugar, although Cuba's chief product and Cuba's big problem, really does not belong to Cubans. More than four-fifths of the sugar is produced with United States capital. These companies also own half of Cuba's farm land—a painful fact if you are talking to a nationalist.

²United States sugar quotas for 1940: domestic beet producers, 23.9%, domestic cane, 6.5%; Hawaiian Islands and Puerto Rico, 27%; Philippines, 15.2%; Cuba, 27%.

The mill I visited owns 15,000 acres of land. It is rented to 3,000 *colonos* or small Cuban farmers who grow, cut and sell the cane directly to the sugar mill. Cane comes up year after year and will grow 8 to 15 crops without replanting. No fertilizer or irrigation is necessary, and soil and climate also favor low cost production—much lower than the hotbed sugar beet industry in the United States.

That brings up a sore point with Cuban sugar men. Although nearly three-fourths of Cuban sugar is normally bought by the United States, that amount could be expanded greatly merely by cutting cane normally left standing in the fields. Sugar mills also own or control twice as much land as has ever been in sugar cane production. War, naturally, changed the sugar picture, and Uncle Sam bought the entire 1942 crop. It isn't only the sugar that we needed—every time a 16-inch gun



Havana Is Capital. This capitol building, as you can see, would not be out of place in Washington, D. C. Many people speak English in Havana, and chances are that you won't go far down the street until some shoe-shine boy says, "Hi, Joe." Havana is only a few minutes' air hop from Florida.

is fired it takes one-fifth of an acre of sugar cane in the form of ethyl alcohol, made from blackstrap molasses. The sugar boom heading Cuban way brings its worries. Cuba will not soon forget the over-expanded industry after World War I—of the necessity to cut sugar production in half from 5.8 million tons to 2.7 million.

"It is the most beautiful land that man's eyes have ever beheld." Some 15th Century scholar put those words into the mouth of Columbus as he waded ashore on October 28, 1492. Since then this island has been romantically dubbed the "Queen of the Tropics" and "Pearl of the Antilles"—Antilles being a catch-all term for these Caribbean islands. I flew the 750-mile length of the island, saw its palm trees and mountains, its bright green patches of sugar cane with red earth in between, frequently catching sight of the surf breaking on both sides of the island. (Width of Cuba varies from 25 to 125 miles.) After the January bleakness of the Middle West, I was satisfied Columbus had hit the mark.

Havana, only two hours by air from Miami, is a gay city of 600,000 people, 60 radio stations and a capitol building that would not be out of place in beautiful Washington, D. C. Many people speak English, listen to U. S. dance bands, and dress like mannequins, while barefoot shoeshine boys familiarly say "Hi, Joe." Despite these trimmings, you soon realize you are not at home.

As a result of my Yankee training, I pitched headlong into my job and started calling on people right after lunch. I was puzzled to find activities of the forenoon had suddenly ceased; stores were closed, streets were cleared, and even window shades were lowered. No half holiday, just siesta! During this 12 to 2 p.m. period even oxen know enough to stay in the shade.

Havana comes to life in the evening. In the sidewalk cafes surrounding the Capitol building, girl orchestras blow loud brass notes and shake their gourds full of BB shot, while strollers fill the streets and sidewalks, and politics is discussed over rum. I learned about another custom that first evening in Cuba—I asked a charming school-teaching señorita (in the interest of practicing my Spanish, of course) if she wanted to

go to the show. "Young ladies," she informed me, "do not go out alone with young gentlemen. Our Mammias go along, too." So instead I went to her home and met Mamma and the rest of the family.

But Havana is not Cuba. Beyond the luxurious suburbs, the broad boulevards and the ruins of famed Morro Castle, you see the real Cuba of sugar cane, cockfighting, oxcarts and fine tobacco. It is comparatively easy to get around on this island, but dangerous. The Havana taxicab driver is a daredevil who would make the "Perils of Pauline" seem like a pink tea picnic. He bursts into narrow streets wide enough for only one car, honking and bluffing his way through at top speed. On Cuban



Cuban Kitchen. The stand-by diet consists of rice and beans and plantains—the cooking bananas. When this woman's husband has work in the sugar cane fields, he has money to buy meat. But cane-cutting season lasts only about two or three months. The rest of the year the family ekes out a living on the fruits and vegetables which grow well in this tropical land.

highways, buses whiz over the roads like drunken roller skaters. Cuba has a fair system of highways, but off the main roads you walk or ride a horse.

Agriculture is the chief source of Cuban wealth—90 per cent of the total exports are sugar, tobacco, fruit and fresh vegetables. The average farmer is poor, renting his land or working for 80 cents a day. His equipment is an oxcart, wooden plow and machete; he plants and harvests by hand, cultivates with a hoe. The storekeeper is his source of credit. Since he specializes in export crops, he frequently must buy his rice and meat at high prices.

On the other side of the ledger is the fact that year around barefoot weather simplifies his housing and clothing problem. His home is built of poles and palm leaves with a thatched roof to keep out some of the rain. But the array of flowers and vivid poinsettias blooming around these humble huts would put any florist display to shame. In the back yard grows his stand-by food, the plantain or cooking banana. This versatile fruit fills in when he cannot afford to buy rice and meat. It can be fried like potato chips or roasted; made into tortillas and served with beans or ground and fried; preserved or made into candy; baked over a slow fire and eaten with salt; or mixed with coconut milk to make a soft drink.

Livestock on the average farm is restricted to one or two pigs, the yoke of oxen and a few chickens. However, chickens are raised more because of their pugilistic qualities than their egg-laying characteristics—on Sunday the Cuban takes his fighting cock to the cockpit.

A long, wicked razor-like spur is attached to the left leg of each fighting rooster in preparation for the life-or-death struggle. The cocks are allowed to peck one another in the craw—to make them good and mad. That would make anybody mad, so they're hurriedly set down. They freeze, then flop. In a tenth of the time it took Joe Louis to dispose of an opponent, one of the roosters is dead, and another cock fight is on before the betting and yelling fans. The cock fighter figures he can't lose. If his rooster wins, he wins bets. If, unfortunately, his rooster is killed, he has fried chicken for dinner.



Tobacco Must Not Be Sunburned. That's why this choice tobacco is raised under cheesecloth. Cuba raises the best cigar wrapper in the world, and makes some of those famous Havana cigars. Tobacco is her second most important export crop.

A Cuban explained, "We have cock fight; we have man fight; but bull fight she is prohibit!"

In western Cuba you see huge fields swaddled in cheesecloth, propped up eight feet above the ground. I peeked into one of these cloth houses and found acres of green tobacco for those famous Havana cigars—this tobacco makes the best cigar wrapper in the world. The finest grades of tobacco are raised under cover so it won't get sunburned. Because of the June-in-January climate, Cuba has a big business growing winter vegetables and fruit for the United States market.

"Cuba's biggest problem is to diversify our production," an agricultural official told me. "We raise sugar and tobacco and vegetables for export. But we don't even raise our own food." More than one-fourth of Cuba's imports are such food products as rice, wheat, meat and lard. Cuba depends upon her large export trade to buy these imported products, and unfortunately foreign capital controls most of these exports. For the average laborer imported goods are expensive. In Santiago I saw suits priced at \$20; shirts for \$2; shoes up to \$8; soap, ten

cents a cake; and other items correspondingly high. How many of these goods can the dollar-a-day laborer buy? White collar workers at \$70 a month cannot buy much more.

Government policy of recent years has been to stimulate home production and encourage other crops. Agriculture has plenty of room for expansion—only 20 per cent of the island is under cultivation. The growing season is twelve months of the year, farm land is cheap at \$25 to \$125 an acre, and plenty of labor is available. Notable progress has been made along certain lines, mainly beef and dairy production. Imports of lard and eggs have decreased, and corn and coffee now are sufficient for domestic needs. But United States farmers still send \$22,000,000 worth of farm produce to Cuba, a heavy drain on her slim pocketbook.

Cuba must necessarily train her sights on agriculture. Her mineral wealth with the exception of manganese and copper is negligible. She has no coal or oil, hence little industry. Her main fuel is charcoal, and her oil import bill alone is six million dollars. Other resources have been wasted. In 1919 it was estimated one-half of Cuba was forested. Today less than 15 per cent of it remains, largely in inaccessible regions, while Cuba pays out \$4,000,000 annually for timber imports. The tragedy is that much of this mahogany, Spanish cedar, ebony and pine was cut and burned in days of soaring sugar prices to make way for sugar lands that were never used, and still lie idle.

The government has encouraged this diversification program by stationing agricultural advisers in the rural areas. Cuba even has an adaptation of our 4-H Club, known as the 5-C Club. United States experts have made an economic survey of the country with a view to encouraging the production of bananas, tapioca, kapok, tung oil and castor beans. But with the war drums beating for more sugar, diversification will undoubtedly take a back seat, at least until the war is over.

Cuba was the last of the Latin American republics to throw off the foreign yoke, accomplishing that feat in 1898 with the aid of Uncle Sam's Rough Riders. But independence only brought more tyranny and bloodshed on a people unpracticed in government. They reaped the result of 400 years of Spanish greed, graft and corruption. A series of revolutions and



Cuban School Children. In recent years the government has established many rural schools, mainly because President Batista remembers that nine out of ten of the Cubans are as poor and underprivileged as he used to be.

counter-revolutions was climaxed by the rule of the gangster Machado, who looted Cuba from 1924-33. When he was deposed terrorism once more enveloped the unhappy island.

Out of this turmoil came a 31-year-old sergeant who calmly promoted himself to commander-in-chief and brought peace to the land. Between 1933-40 Col. Fulgencio Batista ruled Cuba through five different presidents whom he picked. He made his rule legal by having himself elected president in 1940.

Col. Batista is a man of the people. He came up the hard way and remembers that nine-tenths of the Cubans are as poor and underprivileged as he used to be. He has built schools, made playgrounds for children, constructed hospitals and built roads. He has just drawn up a constitution that makes voting compulsory, provides for social legislation, and calls for the division of large estates to give land to the poor *colonos*. More important is the fact he has brought peace and order to Cuba.

"Something is brewing—I feel it," an old line politician told me when I was in Cuba. Three days after I left Cuba, it happened—the only serious challenge to Batista's power in

nine years. The head of the army, believing he should have the same privileges and powers of the good old days when Batista was head of the army, prepared to defy the president. President Batista drove one night to the army headquarters, talked the dissatisfied officers out of their revolution, and the next morning put them on a plane headed for Miami and exile. Times have changed in Cuba.

Not that all flows smoothly. There is still plenty of political hocus-pocus among small grafters and corrupt public officials. Many white collared workers go into politics merely to boost their income. However, one official, maintaining that graft was a necessary evil in Cuba, laid some of the blame on the United States.

"You Americans control all of the business in Cuba; the only business left for us Cubans is politics. So we make politics the year around, not just during a campaign."

I asked the Cuban Chamber of Commerce president what he thought of U. S. business methods in Cuba. "Business may be the same the world over, but methods operate differently, just as the same motor will perform differently in zero weather than it will in 100 degree heat," he asserted. "American business men should adapt themselves to the country if they wish to do business. They must understand the people, their background, and their language. Business men of other countries have been more adept at this."

That brings up the question of United States-Cuban relations. While I was in Havana, a U. S. congressman introduced a bill in the House to admit Cuba as the 49th State. While the average Cuban knows Uncle Sam is mighty close to him, that was a little too close. Papers brought out their biggest headlines, and one suggested the honorable Congressman must have Cuba confused with Puerto Rico, our stepchild in the Caribbean.

Our relations with this Republic do bind us closely. Last year, we bought 84 per cent of Cuba's exports and sold her 87 per cent of her needs. Our business men have a bigger investment in Cuba than any other Latin American country. We have a special tariff agreement on sugar and a naval base at Guantanamo. Cuba, after Mexico, is our best Latin American cus-

toomer, buying 82 million dollars' worth of goods in 1939. And finally, there is the fact that Uncle Sam assisted at the birth of this Republic.

Cuba is not a member of the United States, but she is closer to it than any other Latin American nation.

Cuba At A Glance

Size: 44,000 square miles. Island the size of Pennsylvania.

People: 4,228,000. 50% white; 25% Negro; 25% mulatto.

Capital: Havana. Population, 568,000.

Sells: Sugar, four-fifths of total exports; tobacco, bananas, copper, manganese.

Buys: Manufactured goods; iron and steel products; foodstuffs; petroleum products.

Industry: Sugar is the lifeblood of the country, much of it controlled by U. S. money. Small manufacturing establishments are growing. Agricultural products make up most of wealth.

Cuba has her economic cart hitched to sugar. When sugar is in great demand, fine. But otherwise, it hits the pocketbook of everyone in the island. Biggest problem is to diversify her agriculture.

Haitians Are Happy

HAITI is different! Smallest in the American family of nations, it is the only Negro republic in this hemisphere and the only country whose citizens speak French. Haitians were the first to toss out foreign rulers after our 13 colonies had set the independence example. More farmers in Haiti own their own land than in any American republic. Haiti is an altogether charming land where black magic and voodoo are more common than the three R's, and where our U. S. Marines spent 20 years making the country safe for investors.

"They are the poorest people in the Western Hemisphere—and the happiest!" That description fits the Haitians, a long-time resident assured me as our flying boat flew the few miles from Cuba to Haiti.

When I landed in Port-au-Prince, the capital, I soon found out how Haitians differ from their American neighbors. Ninety per cent are pure Negroes whose ancestors were brought in as slaves from Africa; all others are mulattoes. And just as I was getting in the habit of saying "Si! Si!" when I meant O.K. in Cuba, I had to change my tune to "Oui! Oui!" to say "yes" in the Creole French of Haiti.

Reason for the French language is the fact that the island of Hispaniola was under the French flag for two centuries preceding independence. Haiti shares ownership of this island with the Dominican Republic, Haiti occupying the western third, an area about one-fourth the size of Indiana. When Columbus landed in Hispaniola he found a million Indians, but the old Spanish custom of killing, converting and enslaving "those poor heathen" soon reduced them to a handful. To repopulate the island (Spaniards weren't much of a hand at digging in the soil for anything less than gold) they imported a



Haiti Is Negro Republic. These youngsters are carrying water for their mamma, in gourds balanced on their heads. They live in the most crowded country in Latin America, and their dad makes a living for seven on an acre of rocky land. His cash crop is coffee.



Women Do Trading in Haiti. Usually, they put their produce in baskets and balance the baskets on their heads. The women are more fortunate, they have burros to carry them and the produce—some job for the burros.

boatload of African slaves in 1517, thus starting the first organized Negro traffic to the Americas.

France took the island away from the Spaniards in the 17th century and with slave labor built it into one of the richest American colonies, producing sugar, indigo, coffee and cotton. Soon after the American and French Revolution, germs of freedom, seeping into this out-of-the-way colony, prompted the oppressed Haitians to revolt. After bloody fighting, Haiti in 1806 became independent and took her place alongside of Uncle Sam as the second American Republic. Several years later she assisted Simon Bolívar in outfitting his crusade against the Spanish tyranny in South America.

Haiti, in the aborigine tongue, means "mountainous land," an apt description. But the amazing thing is that Haiti—despite mountains and deserts that allow only a scant portion to be farmed—is the most densely populated nation in the hemisphere. It supports a population of three million who depend almost exclusively on agriculture (politics is a poor second) for a living.

From the harbor of Port-au-Prince, the mountains rise steeply to more than a mile in height. On the way up this mountainside we passed hundreds of Haitian women coming down to market, baskets of produce balanced on their heads. With hands swinging freely, feet bare and flat, they pad along the rocky mountain paths, 5, 10 and 20 miles, seemingly unconscious of 50-pound loads perched rakishly on their heads. More fortunate women straddled their miniature burros—the burros weigh *almost* as much as their riders.¹

"But where are the men?" I asked. The answer is they stay home while women do the marketing. A theory often advanced in defense of the men is that during the days of revolutions (Haiti has had more than its share), men didn't dare show their faces on the road or they would be put in the army. But sociologists grunt "Applesauce!" pointing to the fact that even in their native Africa, the men make their women do most of the work.

Haitian men work—they must work to support families of seven on an acre of rocky ground, as Henri does. We stopped to talk with Henri, a strapping big farmer who was plowing for corn on a hillside as steep as the pitch of a roof. His only implements were an overgrown sickle and a grub hoe. The rocky soil in which he was digging would have ruined any plowshare. But then he has no worries about plowshares; the mountain farmer of Haiti never has seen a plow. Soil conservationists praise Allah for that fact. They say that if these farmers had plows, the most productive part of the mountains would soon be in the seas.

Henri is an average farmer. He grows a little corn, a few stalks of plantains, several avocado trees and some coffee

¹ These 200-pound burros make up the biggest single class of livestock in the country. Haiti has few cattle and hogs.

bushes. The coffee, he sells; the rest, his family eats. No wonder a Middle Westerner observed, "If this were North Dakota, people would starve to death."

Henri's little hut of matted branches plastered with mud is perched precariously on the mountainside. It is about 10 feet square and divided into two rooms, each with the naked earth as a floor. Madame Henri's kitchen is outside under a little lean-to, where she balances her pots on several rocks. I thought I had discovered a new kind of corn tree back of the house until Henri explained it was merely his cornerrib—corn is tied in banana-like bunches and hung in the tree where the rats cannot get to it.

Practically all Haitian farmers own little farms ranging from $\frac{1}{2}$ to 10 acres each. They pay no land taxes, only indirect taxes when they market their produce. Coffee is the main money crop in the mountains, making up about half of this country's total exports. Henri produces about 30 pounds each year. Down on the plains they raise bananas, hemp, cotton, sugar, tobacco and coconuts on land that has been under cultivation for 300 years. Because of its mountainous character, Haiti is blessed with all types of climate for growing the widest variety of fruits and vegetables—everything from water-melons to coconuts.

Haitians in the rural areas seldom go through any official marriage because marriage by the church costs too much. (A domestic servant in Port-au-Prince, earning \$6 a month, paid \$14 to have church bells rung at his wedding.) They're no less devoted to each other, even though back in the hills some of the Haitians are known to have more than one little woman at home. Schools are almost unheard of in many of the rural areas. Instead of going to town on Saturday night, the country folk have outdoor dances where the tom-toms beat, oldsters stomp, youngsters rhumba, and others shoot craps.

Haiti is a land of witches and zombies where black magic plays a big part in everyday life. Voodoo priests can give you charms against the destructive forces of nature, such as lightning and cyclones, or against the curses of your enemies. It works the other way, too—you can put a curse on *your* enemy



Knuckling Down for Marble Game. These happy boys and girls are playing that famous international game—marbles. In the rural areas, few go to schools because there are not enough schools. These boys and girls know more about voodoo and charms than they do about reading and writing.

if you have one. There's a law against voodooism, but that law scarcely reaches beyond the city limits of Port-au-Prince.

Haiti has a good constitution—Franklin Roosevelt wrote it in 1920 when our Marines were policing the country and he was Asst. Secretary of Navy.² Haiti's years of independence have not been calm. In 1843, the eastern two-thirds of the island seceded and set up the Dominican Republic. Revolutions, massacres and counter-revolutions have ripped through Haiti like destructive hurricanes. And in 1915 the U. S. Marines landed for a 20-year visit "to protect American lives and property."

Results of this Marine occupation were good and bad. They built roads, brought order to the country and straightened out the finances. On the other hand, the U. S. Marines were intruders in a sovereign nation. They snubbed Haitians more

² President Franklin D. Roosevelt is quoted as saying, "The facts are that I wrote Haiti's constitution myself, and if I do say it, I think it is a pretty good constitution."



U. S. Goes Into Partnership with Haiti. That partnership is exemplified by these two men, George Heraux of Haiti and Tom Fennell of the United States. The two governments have set up a corporation to develop new tropical crops in Haiti which the United States needs. Rubber is receiving first consideration.

cultured than they, merely because they were of a different color. Uninvited, we set ourselves up as policemen and attempted to reform this neighbor while at home we had such goings-on as Tammany, Chicago gangsterism, and the Tea Pot Dome scandal.

For 20 years the Marine occupation was the chief political issue. But since their withdrawal in 1933, political differences have centered on the friction between the full-blooded Negroes and the relative small handful of mulattoes. The mulattoes have the blood of Frenchmen, enjoy higher standards of living, and are much better educated. Antagonism between these two groups had its root in an old law that said the pure Negroes must be farmers, while the mulattoes could become doctors and lawyers—and rulers. That also throws some light on the undeveloped agriculture.

The Undersecretary of Agriculture turned out to be a young fellow named George, an ex-schoolmate of mine at the

University of Illinois. He and other visionary leaders have made notable progress in arousing the government to the realization that Haiti's wealth and future progress lies in her agriculture. Through rural schools and an agricultural experiment station, a foundation is being laid. George confessed that "everyone wants a white collar job—it's been hard to convince political leaders that our agriculture is important." However, Haiti is now on the threshold of a broad experiment that may point the way to a profound rapprochement in U. S.-Latin American relations.

In the past there has been much talk about the Good Neighbor, and many *Americano conquistadores* have slapped backs and swigged cocktails to convince our Latin American neighbors that Uncle Sam is a great guy. But one of the most concrete efforts our government has ever made towards fostering real understanding has just been made in Haiti. The two governments have formed a corporation for the development of Haitian agriculture generally, rubber particularly.

Tom Fennell, of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, who helped set up a SHADA (*Société Haitiano-Américaine de Développement Agricole*), explains the general idea: "Today, Haitian farmers concentrate their production on a few staple crops—coffee, cotton, cacao, sugar and bananas.³ Too often these commodities are subject to depressed prices on world markets. When that happens, Haitians have little cash income and are dependent almost entirely on the things they grow. These are far from sufficient to maintain a desirable standard of living. This corporation will direct their efforts towards new tropical crops in the spice, drug, oil and fiber fields. Financed by the U. S. Import-Export Bank, the corporation will furnish seed, provide technical assistance, and agree to purchase the crops after they are harvested."

Development of rubber is the keystone of the plan. He says they hope to plant 2,500 acres of rubber annually in Haiti, until the eventual total of 70,000 acres is reached. This rubber project, if all goes well, will double the Haitian national income and provide the United States with 35,000 tons annually

³ In 1938 coffee accounted for 49.9% of the total exports; cotton, 15%; sugar, 11.2%; sisal, 9.3%; bananas, 5.8%.



Tapping a Rubber Tree. The milky sap of the rubber tree oozes from the cut which is reopened every other day. Haiti believes she can produce rubber economically on small farms. Uncle Sam is putting up some money to see if it will work out.

when the trees reach full production. (That is about five per cent of the total U. S. rubber needs in a normal year.)

The old idea that rubber must be raised on huge plantations to be profitable has been blasted—small farmers will grow and tap rubber trees in Haiti, in addition to raising most of their food. In this program of encouraging noncompetitive crops, Haiti will produce what Uncle Sam needs right in his own backyard. We must remember that Indianapolis is closer to Haiti than to San Francisco.

Newly elected President Elie Lescot is happy about the entire thing. Months before Pearl Harbor he unreservedly put Haiti on Uncle Sam's side, passing over memories of Marine occupation:

"Haiti has been an independent nation longer than any other in the Western Hemisphere," he said proudly. "It is a nation of small farmers who own their own land. We of Haiti are not rich in material things, but we prize our freedom, our independence, and our way of living. We believe we are de-

fending that freedom and that independence when we cooperate with the United States in the defense of the Western Hemisphere. We are proud of our role in showing the world that the Good Neighbor Policy means Democracy in Action."⁴

Strong words from a nation occupied for 20 years by U. S. Marines, but Haiti means every word. She was one of the first American nations to declare war on the Axis.

If you ever get a chance to visit charming Haiti, don't miss it. Haitians can teach us a lesson on how to live on a little—and still be happy.

Haiti At A Glance

Size: 10,200 square miles. Smallest republic in the Americas.

People: Negro. Only Negro republic in Americas. People speak French.

Capital: Port-au-Prince. Population, 125,000.

Sells: Coffee, cotton, sugar, sisal, bananas, cacao.

Buys: Textiles, foodstuffs, chemical products, machinery, iron and steel products, oil.

Industry: This is an agricultural country. What manufacturing there is, is based on processing of farm products.

Haiti is a land of happy-go-lucky people, poorest in the hemisphere. A program to diversify Haiti's agricultural production is now under way, with the cooperation of Uncle Sam.

⁴ *Agriculture in the Americas*, July, 1941.

Dominican Republic

THE Island of Hispaniola, only one-eighth as big as Texas, supports two sovereign republics, two sovereign peoples, But these two republics are as different as the color of their peoples.

We've just had a look at the Haitians, French-speaking Negroes who live on tiny one-acre farms where they are their own bosses.

The Dominican Republic, which occupies the other two-thirds of the island, is different. Here the people are mestizo by blood, Spanish by culture, proud by nature, with a 24-cylindered dictatorship as their boss.

This is a beautiful country! The Dominican Republic is "The Land That Columbus Loved Best," if we are to believe the language of the travel folder. He called it Hispaniola, meaning "Little Spain." Nestled in the valleys and perched on the hillsides of this mountainous country, half the size of Indiana, are one and one-half million people. Twenty per cent are Negro, 13 per cent are white, and the rest are mestizo.

Four out of five make their living from the land. It's only a fair living. Except for the big sugar plantations, the farms generally are so small that they wouldn't make gardens for the average farm in the Middle West. One-half of all the farms in the Dominican Republic are less than five acres. Ninety-five per cent of them are smaller than 50 acres. And on these farms the hoe, the machete, and the yoke of oxen are standard equipment.

The average farmer lives in a two-room affair called a *bohio*. Its sides and roof are made from the leaves of the royal palm; its floor is dirt. Usually tacked to the main house is a lean-to which serves variously as a kitchen, wash room, or a place to put the pigs at night. When the farmer goes in for a

little modern improvement he puts pine-board walls and floors in his house. When he gets rich, he has a metal roof.

The Dominican diet is likely to be a monotonous affair although their common dish, *sancocho*, sounds interesting enough. It consists of plantains, cassava, yams, squash and chicken, all cooked together in the same pot. Biggest acreage in the country is given over to plantains—those backyard bananas which will grow practically anywhere and which must be cooked. Malnutrition is widespread and the usual tropical diseases such as hookworm and dysentery sap the energy of the people. The government has recently established a Department of Health and has put a cabinet minister in charge.

The Dominicans have cattle—cattle furnish power as well as milk and beef. Most of them are of native breeds but Holsteins have been introduced to increase milk production, and Zebus have been crossed with the native cattle to give a hardier breed. There is only one milk pasteurization plant in the country—and that's on the president's hacienda.

The rural character of the country is reflected in its exports. More than 95 per cent of the things the Dominican Republic has to sell comes from the soil. Sugar leads the parade and makes up three-fifths of the total. This sugar comes from 11 big sugar mills—mostly owned by U. S. capital—set in the midst of huge sugar estates where peons whack down cane at 35 cents a day.

Cacao is the second most important export crop. The Dominican Republic produces more chocolate beans than any country in Latin America except Brazil. The average production is around 48 million pounds. Coffee is a close third on the export list.

The Dominican Republic, seeing the folly of putting all eggs in one basket, has done a better than average job at diversifying her production. Back in 1931, the government set forth its policy: "... to intensify and extend the production of those articles for which there is an adequate demand, regulating cultivation methods and producing for export markets. . .," and to create a public attitude to "consume what is produced and to produce what can be consumed."

They've done such a good job that food imports during recent years have fallen off as much as 75 per cent. For instance, this nation used to import large quantities of rice. In 1941 she had nine million pounds to export. In recent years a widespread campaign to follow crop rotation, improved breeding, seed selection, and irrigation has boosted production and laid the foundation for real agricultural progress.

Although only about one out of every four can read or write, many special courses have been given to intensify agricultural production. For example: In the rural areas, schools offer a three-year course in reading, writing, and gardening. School gardens have been in operation since 1932.

There are many United States citizens who know the Dominican Republic intimately. Back in 1916, when the First World War made us scurry about to see that our backyard was safe, we decided that we'd better send U. S. Marines to take over the republic, just to be sure. They guarded and liked the island so well that we didn't get the last Marine home until 1924.

It's a matter of debate whether or not Marines were good or bad for the Dominican Republic. Their defenders point out how they built roads and railroads, that they established order and security in a country where bloody revolutions were as common as crime in the United States. They say there weren't any "civil liberties" to destroy because civil liberties were non-existent.

And they tell this story of what used to happen to public money: After the turn of the century, the Dominican Republic couldn't pay her debts. She owed lots of people in the United States, influential people. And these people influenced Uncle Sam to tell this little republic that he would take over the job of collecting all customs. He was to take 55 per cent of all revenue to pay back debts, and the Dominican government was to get the remaining 45 per cent of the revenue. Lo and behold! When the Dominican Republic counted up its share, the 45 per cent turned out to be more than the total revenue of any previous year.

Another thing the U. S. Marines did—whether it was good or bad—was to give opportunity to a young colonel in the



Sugar Sweetens Government Purse. Sugar makes up three-fifths of the total exports of this country. The big sugar mills are controlled by foreign capital, and the peons cut cane for about 35 cents a day.

Guardia Nacional. That colonel, through a coup d'etat in 1930, made himself president. And he still rules the Dominican Republic as if it were one big private hacienda.

General Rafael Leonidas Trujillo Molina is his full name. And as if that weren't sufficient, Congress also voted to call him by such titles as Benefactor of the Fatherland, Restorer of Financial Independence, Generalissimo of the Armed Forces, and First Journalist of the Republic. White foreigners in the country merely call him "Mr. Jones."

The story of the Dominican Republic of today is almost a story of Trujillo. His friends point out that he has a balanced budget, that no beggars are allowed, that it's against the law to go barefooted, that the country is orderly, and that he is 100 per cent pro-United States.

His critics point out that he is pro-United States but he is anti-democratic, by his own example. The government may have a balanced budget, but the people are living in poverty. They tell of the signs in restaurants, "Discussion of politics forbidden." And they can't forget the Haitian massacre in 1937

when 7,000 Haitians were butchered with machetes in the Dominican Republic. These Haitians were farm laborers who had come across the border to cut sugar cane. Haiti and the Dominican Republic had never been too friendly. This massacre didn't help matters.

Because Haiti is the most crowded country in Latin America, her people are constantly shifting over the man-made border separating Haiti and the Dominican Republic. There's still room in the Dominican Republic. Perhaps that's one reason that Trujillo has offered land for an agricultural colony of 100,000 refugees of World War II, mostly Jews. Thus far only a few hundred are at work on this land. Additional ones are expected.

This experiment at Sosua is being watched eagerly. If white Europeans can establish themselves in a tropical country and develop it, other empty lands in the Americas may be opened up, too.

The nation has other blows than political—a hurricane laid waste to the capital city, Santo Domingo, in 1930. This is the oldest Christian city in the Americas, the site of the oldest university, and the final resting place of Christopher Columbus. But it is Santo Domingo no longer. When Dictator Trujillo rebuilt the city after the hurricane, he renamed it after himself, Ciudad Trujillo.

Through programs of health, irrigation, education, and agricultural education, the Dominican Republic has made certain strides in recent years. For instance, they're doing a better job of feeding themselves. But a nation must do more than feed itself to raise a low standard of living. And until the Dominican Republic becomes more than a one-man nation, it can never be more than a one-cylindere republic.

Dominican Republic At A Glance

- Size:* 19,332 square miles. Occupies two-thirds of island of Hispaniola.
- People:* 1½ million. 20% Negro, 13% white, rest mestizo. Spanish culture.
- Capital:* Ciudad Trujillo. Once Santo Domingo, but Dictator Trujillo re-named it after himself.
- Sells:* Sugar, cacao, coffee, cassava starch, molasses, gold, bananas.
- Buys:* Cotton goods, other textiles, iron and steel products, chemicals, foodstuffs.
- Industry:* Wealth comes from the soil. More than 95% of exports are agricultural. Four out of five live on land.

The Dominican Republic in recent years has embarked on health, educational, agricultural programs designed to raise standard of living. Country is dominated by Dictator Trujillo.

Mexico Makes Progress

SOUTH of our border is Mexico—that makes us neighbors—geographically. But when it comes to history and land and people, we're utter strangers.

Mexico, in the wandering Yankee mind, runs largely to bullfights, guitar-strumming bandits, lolling Mexicans on mule-back, and sprawling haciendas in a land of gold and silver. Know-it-all *gringos* near the border add that Mexicans are lazy workmen, grafting politicians who steal oil, and, on the whole, a sort of inferior "native" race. If the average U. S. citizen has heard at all of the Mexican Revolution he conjures up pictures of church-burnings and a bloody orgy of Bolshevism.

Brought up in a respectable Republican home, I can echo "*Viva la Revolucion!*" and still be respectable. This is the banner under which Indian Mexico is marching today.

The *Revolucion* now in full swing represents hope to a barefoot, sick and illiterate people. *Revolucion* means that for the first time many Mexicans have land of their own to till—for the first time they can send their children to schools and call M.D.'s instead of witch doctors. For the first time in 400 years the millions of Mexican peons are being looked upon as men, not mules—human beings like the ones Abe Lincoln had in mind when he talked about people being born free and equal.

Mexico's Indians—and nine out of every 10 Mexicans have Indian blood—once had these human rights; they are descendants of the Mayas, Toltecs and Aztecs.¹ It might jar the fellow who speaks sneeringly of "greasers" if he knew that these Indians developed corn, evolved a calendar, and built magnificent temples in southern Mexico 1,000 years ago. Historians

¹ Of Mexico's 20 million people, one-third are pure-blooded Indians; three-fifths have some Indian blood; only 10% are pure white.



Citizens of Mexico. Until the *Revolucion*, these folks had no land because 1% of the people owned 85% of the land. Poor peons worked for big landowners, were illiterate, ill-fed, and completely dominated by a dictatorial government, no less harsh than the Spanish Conquistadores.

claim they were superior in many ways to 13th Century Europeans, and there is no doubt that Mexico was the seat of the oldest and most advanced civilization in the Americas when the greedy Spaniards burst upon the scene in 1519.

With 632 men and 16 horses, Cortés wasted no time in mopping up Montezuma and his millions of Indian followers who lived in tiny villages and farmed the land collectively.

"I came to get gold, not to till the soil like a peasant!" was the scornful boast of Cortés.

But someone had to produce food while they were looting the country of gold. To coax his *conquistadores* to settle down, the King of Spain gave them large tracts of land. The Indians were not chased off; they were retained as part of the land and forced into slavery by the white masters. Years rolled on and these landlords, aided and abetted by the Church, took

more and more land away from the Indian villages. For three hundred years, the haciendas (and *hacendado* bellies) grew bigger, the Church became richer, the peons poorer.

First cry for Mexico's freedom, in reality an effort to get land for the Indians, was raised by the Priest Hidalgo in 1810. The Spaniards promptly shot him. Mexico was not to be denied, however, and in 1821 she gained her independence from Spain. Although Mexico was free, the millions of Indians and mestizos continued to be dominated by big landowners and dictators who could have given Hitler ideas.

The last of these dictators was Diaz, who robbed the poor peons and gave their land away—some authorities say he gave away more than a hundred million acres to his friends. He mortgaged the country's oil and mineral wealth to foreign capital. It is said he admired the way the United States had beaten back the Indians and finally corralled them on reservations. (Latin American citizens frequently reminded me how shabbily we treated our Indians, when I decried their policy of keeping the Indians down.)

By 1910, less than one per cent of the people owned 85 per cent of the land. Nineteen out of 20 family heads in the rural areas had no land, *yet one family had 12 million acres*. The real crime of all this lay in the fact that many of these huge estates were unfarmed while literally millions were starving for land, and others were slaves on the big haciendas, held there by generations of debt.

Came the *Revolucion*!

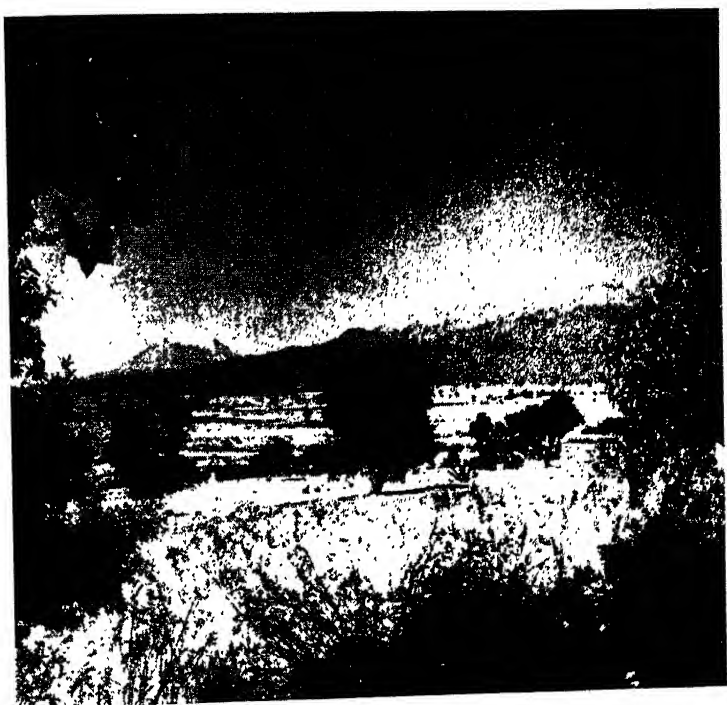
No blustery-words-and-shots-in-the-air brand, this revolution was a blood-bathing affair which flared spasmodically for years until a new constitution was adopted in 1917. Typical of the leaders was Zapata, a humble Indian who inflamed the people with the battle cry of "*Tierra y Libertad*" (Land and Liberty). He was first to say: "Better to die on your feet than to live on your knees."

Greatest friend of the *Revolucion* was President Cardenas. During his 1934-40 regime he made great strides in giving land to the Indians, safeguarding the workers, building schools and giving the ballot to all. The *Revolucion*, Mexicans tell you, is still in full swing today. Not shooting and bloodshed (at

least, not much), but extension of human rights to the under-dog—transforming a nation of “have nots” into one with more “haves.”

That brings up the myth of Mexican riches. Mexico is a veritable treasure house of rich minerals. For four centuries she has produced a third of the world's silver, and much of the gold. She has been one of the world's greatest producers of lead and petroleum. She has copper, zinc, tin, mercury, antimony, platinum. The story of her mineral wealth is told in the export trade figures—three-fourths of her exports are minerals.

Mexico has wealth, all right, but not the Mexicans. Foreign capital controls many of the mines, the bananas, henequen and other exportable items. British investment in oil was



Land Is Life in Mexico. This nation is a storehouse of rich minerals, and three-fourths of her total exports are minerals. But the vast majority of the people, nine out of 10 of whom have Indian blood—till the soil as a way of life. Because of little rainfall it is not a very fruitful life.

\$250,000,000 and U. S. investment totaled \$150,000,000 before foreign oil properties were expropriated in 1938. Only 21 per cent of Mexican exports were produced with Mexican capital in 1937; the next year, with foreign oil properties taken over by the government, that proportion had jumped to 34 per cent. Do you wonder that Mexicans cry "Mexico for the Mexicans"?

But mines are not Mexico. The land is Mexico—a 1930 census showed 76 per cent of the population dependent upon agriculture. That is why 15 million people could not be wrong when they said they wanted land to live on and to work.

But, you say, Mexico is a big country, one-fourth the size of the United States with only 20 million people. That's true. Unfortunately, however, Mexico is no Garden of Eden.

While much of this country lies within the tropics, very little is really tropical. Three-fourths of Mexico is humped up into a dry plateau, half a mile high, where most of the people live and farm—and cry for water. *Less than one-tenth of Mexico's land is actually tillable.* I saw peons trying to grow corn on barren hillsides and planting wheat in fields literally covered with big boulders. Lack of irrigation facilities greatly aggravates the land shortage.

Former President Cardenas has often declared, "Land is life in Mexico!" So, when a hacienda owner keeps a thousand acre patch just to shoot jack rabbits in, it is enough to make any landless peon mad. And that is why the agrarian program is the foundation of Mexico's *Revolucion*.

"Land should belong to those who work it," is the land reform idea in a nutshell. During the past 20 years, 60 million acres of farm land have been taken away from the big haciendas and distributed among 1,800 small villages. Half of Mexico's rural population lives in these small villages, farming the land collectively. No, they didn't get this idea from Russia—they are merely doing as their Aztec ancestors did 400 years ago.

I visited one of these communal villages—*ejidos*.² The 50

² *Ejido* means "way out." The name goes back to Aztec times when villages owned land in common. The land lay on the "way out" from the village, at the outer edges—hence the name *ejido*.



Results of Revolution. In a period of ten years, Mexico established 20,000 rural schools. For the first time, these children of poor peons have real opportunities for education. This school is maintained by an ejido, a village where the people have been given land by the government.

families had formerly worked on a neighboring hacienda of 7,500 acres, much of which lay idle. They had lived in miserable huts, had worked barefooted from dawn to dark; and frequently they had gone hungry. Heads of families were paid a few pennies a day, but they could not leave the land because they were in debt to the landlord. Their fathers before them had been in debt, too.

Came the *Revolucion!* This group of workers petitioned the government for land. After investigating their "agrarian rights" (men must be family heads or over 16 years of age with no land and little capital), the government took enough land from the hacienda to give each farmer 10 acres—20 acres, if it were unirrigated. The village now has its orchard, irrigation canal system and shower bath house. There is a school for children and another to teach sewing and cooking to

the women.³ An elected committee rules the group and heads the cooperative which obtains agricultural credit from the government.

Formerly, the land belonged to the village and the farmers merely were granted the use of the land. But one of President Camacho's first official acts in 1941 was to decree that the land should belong to the individual, as long as he farms it. He can also pass his ten acres on to his heirs, but he cannot mortgage or sell it.

And what happens to the *hacendado*? He is protected. Theoretically, he is paid in government bonds for the land expropriated, although these securities are only worth about 10 per cent of their face value. But the law guarantees that he be left 250 acres of irrigated land or 500 acres of unirrigated land known as a "small property"; this cannot be touched. Livestock men are protected as long as they pay a small tax and utilize their land to its greatest advantage. Coffee, cacao and sugar cane planters also have certain guarantees.

There are all types of *ejidos*. In some the work is done communally. In others, land is parceled out to individuals while the income is split evenly. In the vast Laguna cotton project, more than a million acres are organized on a regional rather than on a small village basis. The ruling of President Camacho granting title to *ejidal* lands confuses it further. But the salient points of the program are these: Land is taken from big landholders and given to landless peons organized in cooperates. Through these cooperatives, the government extends its services of credit, education and health to the peons.

Labor has its block of stock in the *Revolucion*. The half million industrial workers, miners, oil and railroad men have their unions, collective bargaining and minimum wages. You can't fire a man without paying him three months wages. Gone are the days when U. S. corporations paid \$5 a day for labor in the U. S. and only 50 cents a day to their Mexican em-

³ Rural education has gone hand-in-hand with land reform. In the past few years the number of rural schools has nearly tripled. The three R's are secondary to the teaching of farming, hygiene, cooking and sewing.



Home of the Peon. This family of seven lives in the one-room hut of rock and straw. Before the *Revolucion*, they worked for a big landowner. Then the government took land away from the big landowners and divided it among the people who worked it. This family now has 10 acres on which to grow its corn and beans and chili.

ployes. But our A. F. of L. brethren would faint dead away if they could read the Ministry of Labor's 1937 report of wages (they are roughly the same today). Unskilled labor is paid 31 cents for a day's work; a carpenter, 51 cents; a mason, 48 cents; an electrician, 60 cents; and a barber, 39 cents. Remember, that is the wage for a whole day.

Opinion differs as to economic results of this wholesale attempt to help the underdog. Critics say it is a labor holiday gone hog-wild. "What can you expect," they ask, "when you give the railroads to the railroad unions, land to the farm workers, taxis to the taxicab drivers, and the oil wells to the oil workers?" One official declared, "It has been an advance socially but a backward step economically." He claims expropriation disrupted production, citing that prior to 1910 Mexico produced enough corn, sugar and wheat for the population, while in recent years Mexico has been importing large quanti-

ties of these crops. Others believe it would be wiser to develop coastal jungles rather than "reshuffle worn-out land." A few believe the peon works better under a master.

Some hold that the expropriation of 60 million acres has destroyed organized communities. One government official told me of this instance: Much land was expropriated from a hacienda on which there was a big sugar mill. The peons would not (or could not) wait a year for profits from sugar cane, so they planted their land with corn and beans—something to eat. Because of lack of cane, the sugar mill had to shut down. And the following year, Mexico had to import sugar.

"Land for the Indians" is a beautiful idea like "every man is born free and equal," and much social progress has been made. But there is no doubt that red tape, desire for government jobs, and the inevitable graft (these are by no means Mexican monopolies) have hamstrung the program.

However, Mexicans as a whole had absolutely nothing to lose—and they still have much to gain. The dusty countryside of Mexico reminded me of what I was told in Guatemala: "Our Indians are poor, but it is not the hopeless poverty of the Mexican peon." Judging by our car-in-every-garage standard, rural Mexico is miserably poor. Here is a schedule of living costs for the average Mexican family of five, figured out by a government official:

ONE DAY'S FOOD FOR FAMILY OF FIVE

4 quarts of corn	5.8 cents
1.1 pounds of meat	6.4 cents
2.2 pounds of beans	8.2 cents
Atole (Parched corn used for coffee)	2.5 cents
Chili	1 cent
Lard	2.1 cents

Total cost of one day's food for five 26 cents

CLOTHING PER YEAR FOR FAMILY OF FIVE

(3 women, 2 men)

9 dresses (30 yds. cloth)	\$2.78
27 yds. white cloth (for shirts)	1.54
4 pairs of pants	2.89
4 pairs of sandals for work (men)	1.24
2 pairs of shoes for Sunday (men)	2.47
12 pairs of stockings for women	.62
3 shawls	2.48

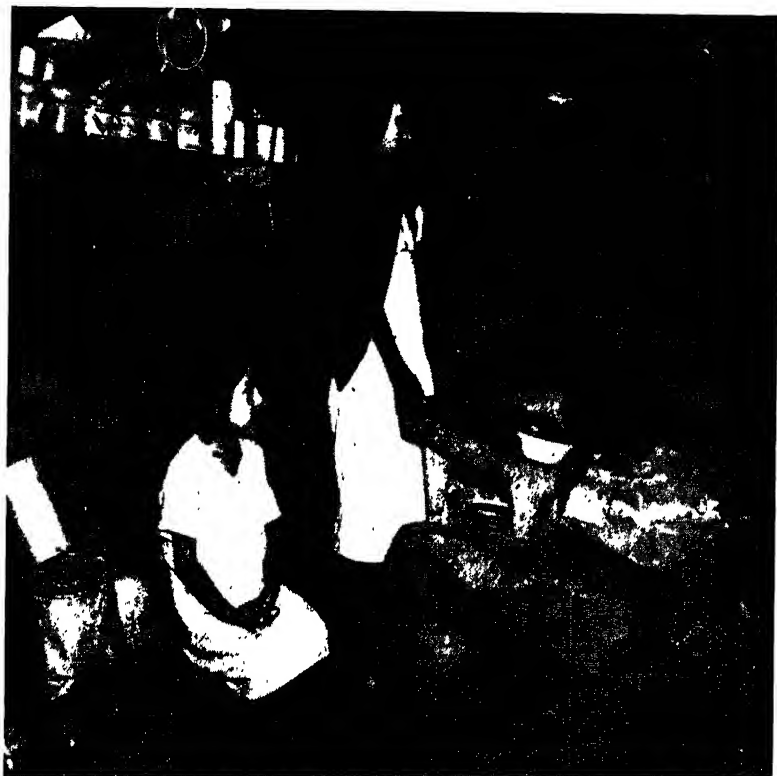
Annual clothing cost for five	\$14.02
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This corn-meat-chili-bean diet is better than that of the average Mexican and represents an improvement over conditions before the *Revolucion*. In Mexico women have shoes only for Sunday wear. Coffee is made from parched corn.

One day when I was out in the country with an official, we went to the village market for lunch. We stopped at an open-air stand where a woman was baking tortillas on a rusty tin. For three cents she shuffled us off a dozen, from her hands to ours. Next we patronized the nearby booth where strings of meat were hanging up and flies were buzzing around—and landing, too. We bought some mutton and my Mexican friend wrapped it in tortillas and began munching away. I followed suit—but not because I was hungry. I had to show him *Yanquis* had tough stomachs, too.

On the high plateau of Mexico I had a visit with Pablo. He called his hut a “rancho” although a Middle Western farmer wouldn’t have rated it very high even as a hog house. He had rolled rocks together for the walls, and with a few poles, attached a roof of straw. Windows and chimney were conspicuous by their absence; the floor was of dirt. Pablo and Maria, his wife, and their five children lived in this one-room house. And frequently the chickens and pigs wandered in through the open hole that served as a door.

Maria cooked over an open fire. She had a griddle to set over the fire, a flat stone to crush the corn for tortillas, a large water jar, and several small pots and bowls. Her broom—the



Inside the Home. Here is the room in which all of the family lives. They cook over an open fire. The girl is getting ready to crush corn for tortillas. In the other end of the room they sleep on floor mats, covering with the garments they wear.

floor was neatly swept—was made of rushes. Bed and chairs were the same, a straw mat spread on the floor. Bed clothes? They cover by wrapping up in the clothes they wear. At one end of the room was a tiny crucifix and badly smoked-up picture of the Virgin Mary. When the baby gets sick, they call an old woman from the village who uses words, rattlesnake skins and herbs to cure him. If he dies, then it's God's will. There are millions of Pablos and Marias in Mexico.

Many new roads now link the continent but thousands of villages have only donkey communications with the outside world. These villages have no electricity, no doctors and few schools. Buzzards roosting on the houses are never disturbed—they serve as a sort of sanitation bureau and garbage man. Many of Mexico's Indians do not speak Spanish, and there are dozens of different languages. People, customs and dress vary widely with the various sections of the country. Tehuantepec

is most different. There the woman—she is the loveliest in Mexico—is the head of the house, bossing the meek and undersized male of that region.

One task of the *Revolucion* is to make all of these people Mexicans. If the revolution has done nothing else, it has given them hope. And if Mexico's revolution brings economic and political freedom to its peons, it will also bring hope to other oppressed peons from the Rio Grande to the Straits of Magellan. (Maybe we should include our own southern Negroland.)

Modern Mexico City, the third largest city of Latin America, stands out like a jewel in a field of broken bricks. It has all of the so-called earmarks of modern civilization—honking autos, skyscrapers and neon signs. Sleek, shiny cars are in abundance for that is one way people show their wealth. Mexican señoritas are as pretty as their Hollywood stand-ins. Streets were crowded with well-dressed women wearing orchids, stepping around the barefoot beggars sitting on the sidewalks. Churches are masterpieces of ancient art and architecture. At the lonely Bellas Artes theater I heard Millstein, the famous violinist. Mexico City's public buildings, gardens, parks and bars make it one of Latin America's most attractive cities.

When you go to Mexico, throw away your watch. The high-gear go-getter will collapse with the fidgets if he tries to maintain his "American" schedule. I think I know the secret of the fine Mexican lace—somebody took up knitting and needlework to pass the time as he sat in an anteroom waiting to see a government official. In all Latin American countries I wrestled with a minimum of hustle-bustle and a maximum of red tape. But Neighbor Mexico wins the dillydally prize.

For instance: I had a 9:00 appointment to go into the country with a government official. Past experience prompted me to show up at 9:30. The official showed up at 10:30. Our car was ready at 11:15, but not the right one. At 11:45 we got the right one, and by 12:00 noon we were ready to go. But then, of course, we couldn't start because it was nearly time for siesta—that active institution which closes more doors daily in Mexico City than Sunday does in God-fearing communities. Offices close from one to three every afternoon.



Spinning Yarn. This gentleman of Taxco is busy at his spinning wheel, spinning the wool yarn for the colorful *sarapes*, those rainbow-striped blankets which the men use as coats in the day time, as blankets at night.

(Lest we feel superior about our go-getting activity, be advised that Mexicans think we're a bunch of chumps for exhausting ourselves and never taking time to enjoy life.)

A bright spot in this impoverished land of dusty villages and miserable homes is the fascinating native crafts and culture of penniless peons. I saw them making beautiful pottery, mixing the clay with their bare feet, and fashioning graceful water jugs with the eye of a master. Their lacquer work, basketry and lace are superb. Women spin and weave fabrics as gay as their homes are colorless.

They make colorful *sarapes*, those rainbow-striped blankets which men slip over their heads and use as coats during the day and as covering at night. The woman's *rebozo*, also a home creation, is indispensable. It is draped gracefully over the woman's head as part of her clothing; at night it becomes bedclothing; slung on the back, it becomes a hammock for her baby; and it even serves as a handkerchief in case of need.

An automobile ride from Mexico City to Guadalajara takes you across the heart of the Mexican plateau: Three-hundred-year-old churches rear their majestic spires over a poverty-stricken landscape Everywhere on mud-plastered houses were the words, "Viva Avila Camacho!"—their way of saying "Hurrah for the new president!" Fields stretch up mountain slopes so badly eroded they look like strip mining spoil banks Women wash down at the creek, hanging their clothes on the bushes to dry Men herd oxen between the corn rows, their wives following to uncover the corn Little girls in dresses to their ankles watch black and white sheep graze on rock strewn slopes Men and mules with huge loads on their backs trudge to market Fellows in fields of wheat use little sickles, laboriously binding the bundles by hand Others with wooden pitchforks toss straw in the air to let the breeze separate the wheat from the chaff.

An unescapable feature of the barren landscape is the *maguery*—it looks like a gigantic century plant and is used for fiber, fence, food and firewater. Stringy fiber of the *maguery* is woven into rope and sandals, and serves also as thread for the little girl's first sewing lesson. Her needle is a thorn from the



Mexico Has Its Art. This artist paints exquisite figures on the graceful jar. These folks make beautiful pottery, mixing the clay with their feet, and fashioning it with the eye of a master. Their lacquer work too is superb.

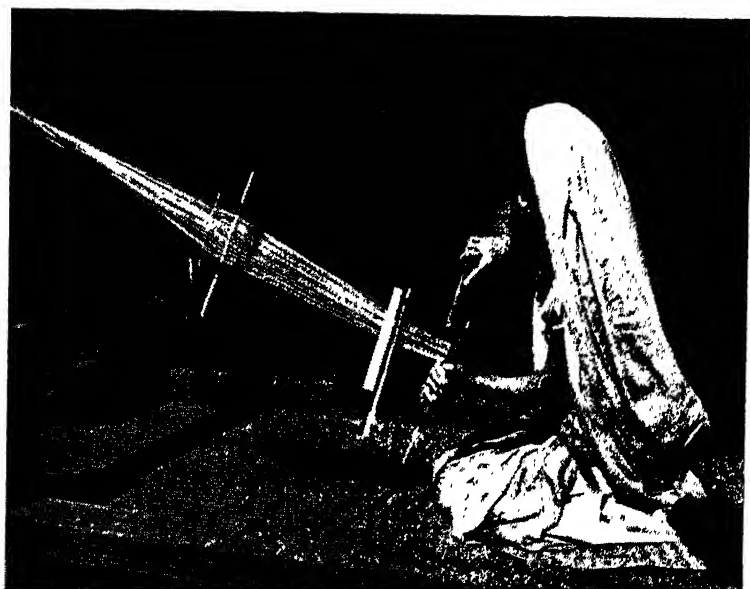
leaf tip. The broad *maguey* leaves thatch many huts and make durable fences. The heart of the trunk is boiled for food and the grubs which feed on the plant are a fried delicacy.

But most important *maguey* derivative by far is *pulque*, fermented sap that is a favorite firewater for man, woman and child in rural Mexico. After the heart of the *maguey* plant is cut out, its sap drains into the hollow at the rate of several quarts a day for as long as six months. Sap gatherers suck the sap out of the hollow with a long gourd, emptying it into grotesque sacks. (These sacks are made from pigskins turned wrong side out—the holes tied up with a string.) Because peons do not restrict their *pulque* drinking to fiesta days, the government has tried to discourage the planting of *maguey*, despite all of its other strong points. Its planting is forbidden on land given to peons.

With all of their poverty, there is a spirit of fun in Mexico

where every day is a *fiesta* day somewhere. These *fiestas* bring on an explosion of dances, fireworks and fantastic parades reminding me of China where I once heard a brass band heading a funeral procession playing "There'll Be a Hot Time in the Old Town Tonight." During the Christmas season, some villages re-enact the Christmas story with a Mexican "Mary" on a burro, led by some barefooted "Joseph." They knock at house after house and are refused shelter in keeping with the Bible story. During Holy Week, you can buy grotesque paper "Judases" at any market complete with gunpowder and fuse. On Holy Saturday, Judas is blown sky-high in villages throughout the country with accompanying shouts and hulla-baloo.

Mexico's land program has not been a simple matter of saying, "Here, from now on this land is yours." Agricultural methods in many sections are as crude as any I have seen on five continents. Corn and beans are the staff of life in Mexico, occupying one-half of the cultivated land. Corn is



Sash in the Making. This little 12-year-old girl is the daughter of the head man of Tarrascan village. She is weaving the long woolen sash that men and women of Tarrascan wear about their waists.



Music in Their Souls. Every day is fiesta day somewhere in Mexico. And fiestas call for music, and an explosion of dances, fireworks and parades.

planted by hand in a furrow made by a wooden plow or in a hole made with a sharp stick. Much of their wheat is sown by hand, and cut with a hand sickle. It is threshed by trotting donkeys, or with a long pole in the hands of a strong man—one explanation of the nine-bushel wheat yield. Modern machinery is coming along, although Mexico will have wooden-plow agriculture for a long time. That is just one of her problems.

"Mexico's biggest problem is watering our land," Minister of Agriculture Gomez told me. Already Mexico has tackled that job with amazing results, rejuvenating more than three million acres for thousands of farm families. Water means life; no water means—well, take the case of Huichapan. Population there declined from 12,000 in 1880 to 2,139 in 1935 because it was impossible for the farmers in that area to grow corn cheaper than it could be shipped in by rail. During good years they got 15 bushels to the acre; during bad years, they

had complete crop failures and faced starvation. Irrigation is giving them a new lease on life.

The *Comision Nacional de Irrigacion* is thorough in its work. When a group of farmers petitions for an irrigation project, engineers make a survey; agronomists test the soil and study the capabilities of the region; meteorologists give data on climate; and economists study costs and values. It is not done haphazardly. As more and more funds are thrown into the battle for water, more and more land is made usable in this land-hungry country.

"Politicians are never interested in agricultural research—it takes too long to show results," complained one agricultural official. "Corn is a native of Mexico, so we should have the best in the world. Yet our average is less than nine bushels to the acre." (Illinois corn average in 1942 was 54 bushels.)

All of these problems are being tackled. A program of hybrid corn development has been laid out, but it will take 10 years to develop seed. They are experimenting with olive trees. (This is one example of how the Spaniards kept their colonies dependent on the Mother country—Mexico has no olive trees although she uses much olive oil.)

Not even chili is being neglected; they are looking for new varieties. If "new" means "hotter" may I never expose my tongue to the new variety. I was burned once—never again. It was out in the country where I saw people eating long cucumbers dusted with red chili pepper. I tried one and it was good. Half way through another my mouth began to burn. Since I'd been specifically warned that water wasn't safe to drink in the rural areas, I had nothing with which to put out the fire on my tongue. Mexican chili is hot.

Many authorities believe Mexico's biggest future development will come in the tropical plains, now largely untapped, and Uncle Sam has sent technicians to survey the possibilities of developing non-competing crops. Enough bananas are now grown in these areas to make Mexico the second largest world producer of these fruits. Three-fourths of the world's production of chicle, raw material for chewing gum, is produced in these dense forests. A third of the world's vanilla



They Still Flail Their Grain. A long pole in the hands of a strong man is still a common way to thresh wheat and barley in Mexico. Others prefer to let their oxen tramp the grain from the straw. Wheat averages only about nine bushels to the acre.

supply, and large amounts of henequen fiber come from Yucatan.

The United States, interested in all of these items, has also made surveys of rubber, cinchona and coconuts. Mexico now produces rubber, although not from the tropical rubber trees. The guayule bush which grows on the desert plateau, supplied 10,000 tons of rubber in 1912, only 3,000 tons last year. This shrub is ground up when it is three or four years old and the latex extracted. Our government approved a project to stimulate the planting of guayule throughout the Americas. But plantations in California have not proved too satisfactory.

"Our entire livestock industry needs a boost," declared Dr. Guillermo Bravo, director of livestock production. "Only half of Mexico's 150 million acres of range land is in use. We could produce four times as much wool as we do now, yet last year we imported large amounts. We need more milk and beef; milk goats are the poor man's cows, and a lot of folks are too poor to even own a goat. Hog production is decreasing,

while Mexico must import increasing amounts of lard from the United States."

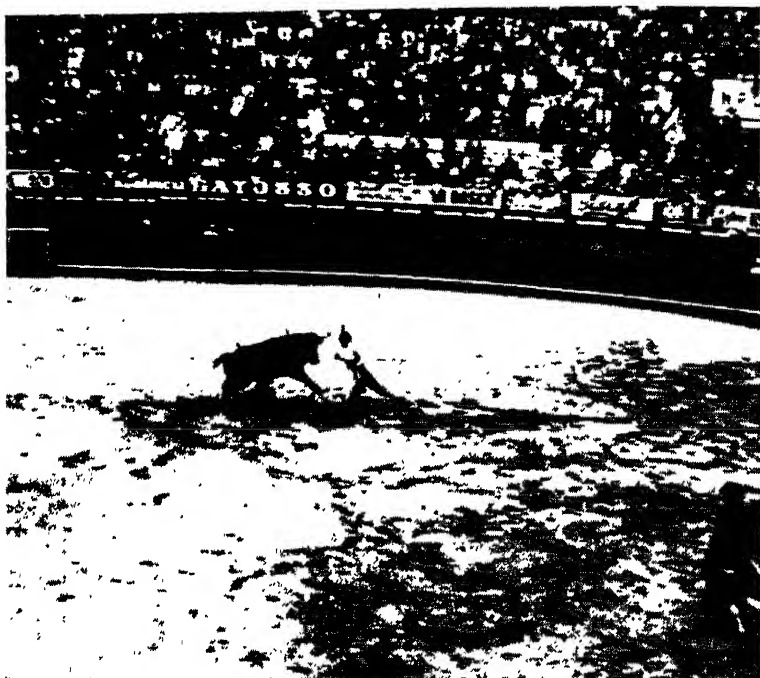
Hogs are of the razor-back variety, usually of unknown ancestry. (In one province, they are hairless.) One reason production is decreasing is that the peons are eating more of the corn they raise, instead of feeding the pigs. Improved roads, too, mean corn can be transported to market. Formerly, it was cheaper to feed the corn to hogs and let them carry the corn to market in the form of pork and lard.

This country has about ten million cattle, used for such diverse purposes as food, fighting and farm power. Many pull plows and oxcarts since the tractor is about as rare in Mexico as the wooden plow in Indiana. The range country is in the north and thousands of cattle are driven across the border to ranches in our southwestern states.

Livestock problems are being tackled vigorously by a scientific staff in the Ministry of Agriculture. Purebred livestock has been imported and breeding stations have been established in various sections. Vaccines are being developed to fight diseases. Government veterinarians are located throughout the country to give advice to the livestock men. They are enthusiastic about the artificial insemination because "it makes our money go farther, and we don't run the risk of losing expensive imported animals by disease."

However, more care is spent on breeding bulls for the bull ring than on improving cattle for milk and beef. The idea of a bull fight, I learned, is to see somebody almost get killed, but not quite.

As the big, black five-year-old bull snorts into the arena looking for blood, the *matador* with a red cape teases and side-steps the bull's furious charges, frequently jumping over the fence to escape. Then comes a *picador* on horseback, with the belly of the blindfolded horse bandaged in a mattress as protection. As the bull charges the horse, the fellow on horseback sticks a spear into the bull's back, designed to make the bull madder still. Well, that would make anybody mad, and so frequently the bull gets his head under the horse and upsets him.



Comes the Kill. The Sunday bullfight is still the biggest entertainment in Mexico City. Most exciting moment comes when the toreador buries his sword to the hilt between the bull's shoulders as it charges directly at him. The bull goes down, the crowd roars, the toreador bows, and three decorated mules drag out the beef before another bull bounces into the ring.

Then comes the darts. Fancy-colored, three-foot-long darts with fishhook ends are taken by the *banderillero*, one in each hand. He dares the bull to come his way, and when it does, the *banderillero* jabs both darts into the bull's back, side-stepping as he does so. The second *banderillero* repeats with another pair of darts, and the third does likewise.

By this time the bull is pawing and quivering, and his black back has splotches of red. Now the *toreador*, his long hair done up in a knot, with red cape and concealed sword gives the crowd a show by daring the bull to charge the red cape. If the *toreador* is extra daring, side-stepping the bull's rushes and turning his back as the 1,600 pounds of maddened energy hurtles by, the fans go wild and toss straw hats and coats into the arena.

Comes the kill! As the bull charges directly at him, the *reador* buries the sword to the hilt in beef between theoulder blades. The bull goes down, the crowd cheers, the *reador* bows, three decorated mules trot in to drag out the ef, and another bull bounces into the arena. It's gory business, but the crowd yells for blood.

Uncle Sam fits into the picture of the new Mexico. Theast has not been pleasant. Mexicans still believe the Unitedtates robbed her of Texas, California and other rich lands. They know that Yankees have long regarded Mexicans as ie British in the Far East have looked down upon "natives." n our side of the border, oil men remember Mexico as the ountry which took their oil companies. After the oil expro-riation controversy in 1938, we cut off our nose to spite our ace by boycotting Mexico, forcing her to sell oil and other strategic materials to the Axis powers.

But better days are ahead. With the election of middle-oader Camacho, many believe Mexico is headed for smoother sailing. And as our Good Neighbor policy pays dividends, Mexico daily becomes more pro-United States, although I still saw posters reading "Down with the Barbarous Yanks." Mexicans from all walks of life assured me that "never has the feeling towards the United States been so genuinely friendly." President Roosevelt's visit to Mexico in April, 1943, was the first time in 34 years that a U. S. president had set foot on Mexican soil.

There is the matter of trade. In 1941, we furnished Mexico with 94 per cent of her imports and bought 90 per cent of all the goods she had to sell. Our investment in Mexico totals half a billion dollars—and President Camacho is doing his level best not to scare it away. The oil expropriation problem, that caused no small amount of ill feeling, is on its way to settlement without help from the U. S. Marines.*

* A joint commission has set the sum of \$23,995,991 as full payment for U. S. oil properties. This agreement is not binding on the oil companies, however, who value their properties at more than \$150,000,000. Mexico, on the other hand, contends they are worth no more than \$15,000,000.



Good Neighbor Wallace Visits. "Feeling of Mexicans towards the United States is better than at any time in history," I was told by a Cabinet Minister in Mexico City. Good Neighbor Henry Wallace has helped improve our relations south of the border.

World War II has brought our countries more closely together than they have ever been, as contrasted to the first World War when Mexico was openly hostile towards Uncle Sam. A cabinet minister told me: "The nations of the Americas have two choices—they can either stand together against the forces of destruction; or they can be destroyed by those forces. Mexico will adhere to the policy of American solidarity as outlined by President Roosevelt."

On June 1, 1942, Mexico became the tenth Latin American nation to declare war on the Axis.

As democracies over the world fight for their lives, Mexico wants to help fight, too. *Revolucion* has paved the way for democracy in Mexico since Mexicans, along with the Poles and Chinese, have felt the oppressive boot of dictatorship. Mexico has taken her stand alongside Uncle Sam.

For our part, we would do well to cultivate and understand Mexico, nearest of our Latin American neighbors. Hemi-

spheric solidarity begins at home—in North America. We need this neighbor, as Mexico needs us.

Mexico At A Glance

Size: 760,000 square miles. One-fourth the size of United States.

People: 20 million. One-third pure-blooded Indians; three-fifths have some Indian blood; only 10% are pure white.

Capital: Mexico City. Population, 1,230,000.

Sells: Lead, zinc, petroleum, copper, gold, silver, henequen, coffee, bananas.

Buys: Manufactured products, semi-manufactures, machinery, food-stuffs.

Industry: Three-fourths of Mexico's exports are minerals. But three-fourths of the people depend upon a poor soil for their living. Small consumer goods industries have greatly increased during recent years.

The Revolution is still on in Mexico. This nation is undergoing a vast social change which promises to evolve as a healthy democracy. But Mexico has a long way to go, both politically and economically.

Good Neighbors

NOW that we have had brief glimpses into the lives of our Latin American Neighbors, let me hastily add that it is an over-simplified picture, not intended to give you all the answers about these other Americans. Since many trivialities of our everyday life are necessarily quite similar, I have stressed the differences, at the same time consciously striving to present typical pictures.

If I write of rural slums, it is with the knowledge that in the richest country in the world we also have slums. If I write critically of oppression of the peon, it is with the profound conviction that Uncle Sam has some spadework to do at home on extension of the four freedoms. And if I do not go into rhetorical ecstasy about the beautiful parks and modern cities, it is not because I did not see and appreciate them—only that I believe the key to Latin America lies beyond city limits.

Dangerous as it is to lump Latin America together and generalize, I was impressed with certain obvious facts about these nations as a whole. The majority of Latin Americans, on the one hand, are poor and unhealthy, illiterate and isolated, subsisting on bare necessities. On the other hand, they are charming folks, artistically inclined, lined up with Uncle Sam against the Axis, and devoted to the pursuit of happiness—they can easily give us a few lessons in the enjoyment of living.

The majority of Latin Americans are very poor. No less than two-thirds of them are concerned only with scratching a simple living from the soil. Although some of them have their own land, more are peons who live and work on a large chunk of land owned by an absentee landlord. This peon gets a little hut to live in, a small patch of land for corn and beans, and five to 50 cents a day for his work.

The peon's city cousin is poor, too. He must work five to ten times as long as his United States neighbor to buy a loaf of bread or a pair of shoes. His pitifully meager wages vary from 20 cents to a dollar a day. White collar salaries are little better.

A stenographer may get \$25 a month; a school teacher, \$35; a government clerk, \$45 a month. Even though a dollar goes farther in Latin America, workers there are miserably paid.

Agriculture—Latin America's chief source of wealth—is primitive as carried on in the majority of the countries. The farmer has a team of oxen, a wooden plow and a machete. He drops his corn by hand and covers it by foot—and usually it is a bare foot. He cuts his wheat with a little sickle, a few straws at a time. The trampling feet of oxen are his threshing machine, and a good stiff breeze separates the wheat from the chaff.

However, there is a general awakening throughout Latin America to the vital importance of agricultural development. Argentina and certain sections of other nations already do a tiptop job of farming. In fact, they provide such progressive competition that mere mention of their surplus crops raises hair on the necks of our tariff watchdogs. Homes of the *estancieros* are magnificent mansions. The big landowner's mode of living compares favorably with the best in any country, but landowners are few—peons many.

The typical home of the farm peon is made of bamboo poles covered with palm leaves, sticks chinked with mud, or mud bricks. The roof is thatched with leaves or grass and the floor is invariably of dirt. One or two rooms is home for five to seven people, and perhaps some wandering livestock. That's all there is to the average hut—except for its air of hospitality. The never-failing farewell from the crudest hut is "*Tiene siempre su casa, señor.*" That means, "This is always your home, sir," and they mean it.

The housewife doubles as a pack horse. Not only does she take care of her children, crush corn between flat stones, cook over an open fire, and bake in an outside mud oven—barefooted, she works in the field and carries heavy loads balanced on her head to the village market. In her spare time, she spins yarn and weaves cloth which partially clothes her family. Many of these fabrics are artistic creations, fine enough to be offered for sale at fancy prices in Chicago's biggest department store.



Latin America Has Beautiful Buildings . . . The Cathedral of Guatemala is a fine example. Practically all of the capital cities have so-called earmarks of modern civilization, including neon lights.

The Latin American poor are usually unhealthy because of malnutrition, disease and utter ignorance of hygiene. Illiteracy is high. Although most countries have laws requiring children to go to school until they are fifteen, actually there are not nearly enough schools and teachers to go around. If the children get three or four years' schooling, they're lucky. And yet we must not forget that Latin America cradled universities and libraries before the Pilgrims ever saw Plymouth Rock.

Knowing that, it is all the more temptation to jump to conclusions and observe that Latin Americans obviously have been taking too many siestas. But that is grossly unfair. If José of Ecuador had the same opportunity and the same incentive to do a fine job of farming as Joe of Illinois then, and only then, would we be justified in judging Latin Americans by our standards.

But José is a different man, living in a different world, faced with tremendous problems. Therefore, we cannot say he is "backward" when he is battling handicaps that might set Joe, the tractor farmer, back into the wooden plow furrows which José follows.

Here are some of these handicaps Latin American farmers have: (1) Early settlers were seeking gold and glory, not a home. (2) Geographical barriers such as mountains and lush jungles isolate many regions and make transportation extremely difficult. (3) Throwing Europeans, Indians and Negroes into a melting pot has not "melted" them. (4) Midget size of many nations and lack of wealth has made programs of education, road building and public health difficult.

Let's consider our ancestors first. Joe and the rest of us had the benefit of hard-working ancestors who came to this country because they wanted to work and worship as they pleased. They came to farm, to build homes, to start with a clean slate. They found an ideal combination of rich soil, favorable climate and rich natural resources. With God's help, they put us in clover.

Not so in Latin America. José's Spanish ancestors came in the interest of gold, glory, and gospel. They disliked work, and



... But Most Latin Americans Live Like This. This humble Panama hut is typical of rural Latin America, where live the families which produce three-fourths of all wealth.

the upper classes of Latin Americans today look down upon manual labor and tilling the soil as work for peasants. They transplanted their church, their traditions and political system. For 300 years, Spain controlled all but two of these countries. She refused to let them trade with one another, was more interested in their precious metals than the development of the soil. When the colonies finally broke away and set up house-keeping on their own, they were utterly unprepared for self government and, furthermore, they inherited the graft and political corruption sown by the Mother Country. You can see, these people did not have a fair start.

Then there are the Indians. From our "white" way of thinking, we were lucky our forefathers found so few Indians in our share of the New World—so few that we easily killed them off and forced them back on reservations. (Latin American citizens use this as Embarrassing Question No. 1—the treatment of our Indians.)

It was a different story in the Latin American republics where the *conquistadores* found many Indians. They killed some, enslaved others, and broke the spirit of more. Yet today, the populations of several countries are 75 per cent Indian. Half of the Latin Americans have some Indian blood—in itself, not a disparaging fact. All of the original Americans Columbus called Indians because he thought he had discovered the Indies. We should dismiss the prejudice that Indian is always synonymous with the war whoop and tomahawk. Most American Indians were vastly superior to the naked redskin that challenged our ancestors. They had many worthwhile qualities. However, mixing their communal farms with the Spanish hacienda, their pagan gods with Catholicism was bound to cause trouble. And it has!

Add millions of former Negro slaves to these Spaniards and Indians and the racial dissimilarity becomes even more accentuated. In fact, in some countries the people are so diverse in traditions and ways of living that only a strong government can hold them together. And so the dictator was born. In our sense of the word, it is charitable to say that half a dozen of these 20 republics are democracies. Uruguay, Costa Rica and Colombia are notable exceptions. But possibly, as many observ-

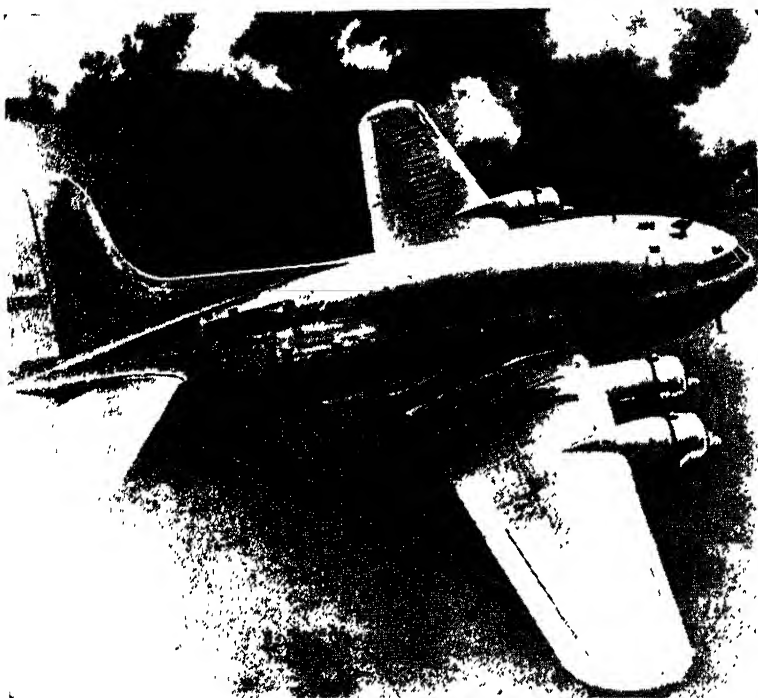
ers point out, nations full of graft, illiteracy and diverse populations need a *good* dictator. Of course, the rub is finding a *good* dictator—and keeping him good.

In addition to people and government, there is the matter of geography. The great Amazon jungle—an honest-to-goodness jungle with jaguars, snakes and Indians with poisoned arrows—stretches into half a dozen countries. It covers an area as big as the United States east of the Mississippi. There are no roads, no railroads, and much of it is unexplored. In these jungles, nature has kept ahead of man and his machete.

Mountains, too. The Andes fence reaching as high as 23,000 feet, has isolated east coast countries from those of the west. Mountains and jungles have proved such formidable barriers to transportation that today it is impossible in many instances to travel by either auto or train from one bordering nation to the next. If you go, you fly or ride a donkey. The 20 Latin American republics have only one-third as much railroad mileage as the United States, and a much smaller percentage of roads. The airplane has done the best job of hurdling barriers, and Uncle Sam can thank Pan American Airways for the fine work it is doing.

The Pan American Highway is an ambitious project to link Alaska with Buenos Aires. Work is now progressing rapidly with Uncle Sam's aid. But it will be a long time before one can drive down to the South American continent. Between Texas and the continent there are eight countries, including Colombia. Yet when I made the trip recently you could drive from border to border in only two. This lack of transportation means that these Latin American peoples are strangers to their next door neighbors. There is little trade between them which would make for more interdependence and a higher standard of living.

Why, you ask, do not these nations build roads, set up programs of education and health? Mainly because they have no money—the miniature size of many of these republics is a handicap. You could put the eight smallest Latin American republics inside Texas and have enough room left for two more El Salvadors. It would take 325 Haitis to make a nation the size of Brazil. Yet these small nations in their maintenance of an



These Planes Are Blazing New Sky Routes . . . I flew in this giant strato-liner over ocean and jungle to Brazil. Airplanes now link nations which were strangers.

army and diplomatic offices have all of the overhead expenses that go with being a "sovereign nation." The Republic of Paraguay, for instance, has a national budget of only \$2,500,000, only one-seventh as much as Rhode Island spends. These small nations just do not have the money to build roads and to promote education, health and public welfare programs.

It's a vicious circle because until these people are educated they will not learn about hygiene and malnutrition. And until they are healthy they will continue to be apathetic to progress of all kind. Yet until these nations make material progress they will not have the money (unless foreign capital comes in) to launch their education and health work.

Experts say more than half of these countries are not large enough nor rich enough from the economic standpoint to set up housekeeping on their own. But do not tell that to any Latin

American, no matter how small his country may be. They have too much of the "Hurrah for Our Side" spirit ever to court union with a next door neighbor. The Central American republics have tried at least a dozen times to do business as a federation, but each effort was wrecked on the rocks of national jealousy.

Although a lot of gold and silver has been lugged out of these countries, they are neither gold mines nor Utopias. With the exception of Brazil, none of these countries has the iron-oil-coal-soil combination which puts long pants on Uncle Sam; they can never hope to be great industrial nations. This is a blow to the nation, and to the farmer because he has no large wage-earning class to sell his surplus to. And how can he buy a tractor or machinery or a steel plow except by trading his farm products?

There is a definite trend towards consumer goods manufacturing throughout Latin America today. It got its first impetus



... But Much Freight Still Travels on Backs of Men. Lack of transportation is one of Latin America's biggest problems. Nations may border one another, and yet many times the only intercourse is by burro or plane.

during World War I, and now is receiving additional stimulation. Uncle Sam has stepped in to help with such projects as the steel plant for Brazil, all of which will be of eventual benefit to us. Although coal is almost totally lacking, these countries do have certain amounts of oil and water power of which they are gradually making use.

But her soil remains Latin America's main source of wealth—less than five per cent of it is being utilized. Agriculture has been neglected even though ownership of land is a badge of aristocracy. Large landholdings are the rule with peons, who have never known anything else, farming the land as their great-grandfathers had done before them. The landlord takes little interest in farming beyond a self-sufficiency goal, which means he is not producing wealth or capital. Scientific methods are unknown except in Argentina, southern Brazil and small sections of other countries.

Latin America has 19 per cent of the world's land, but only six per cent of the people. Large areas are almost empty. New settlers must come from immigration or by natural growth within the countries. Prospects for immigration are poor. Immigrants can do two things. They can buy a big plantation and run it along the lines of most Latin American haciendas. Or they can buy a little piece of ground and work it themselves. However, few immigrants have money to buy a hacienda, and since in most countries manual labor has little dignity, they dislike to settle on small farms.

Natural expansion within the country requires pioneering blood, men who know how to farm, a system of small landholding and accessible markets. It is hard to find all of these conditions in one place. So farming, for the most part, continues to drag along at the wooden plow pace.

But that brings up a very important difference in the Latin American outlook on life. The Latin American is no go-getter. He gets much more pleasure out of spending money than in piling it up. He prefers artistic accomplishments to "making a pile." In other words, the big landowner prefers to take such profits as he may get and spend them in the capital city (or in Europe if there is no war), rather than investing in such a lowly thing as fertilizer to increase his farm production.

The Latin American takes life in stride, and at his own pace. Trying to rush him at Yankee pace is harder than trying to make a mule gallop—I don't think it has ever been done. I had to drink coffee, sit in lobbies, spend endless hours in social amenities before officials would start to discuss my questions. The Latin American way of life is predicated on the belief that you should enjoy yourself as you go along. And who am I to say they are wrong?

Too many siestas? No, I don't think so. And as Joe turns the water faucet in his Illinois kitchen, sees his children get on the high school bus, drives his auto to town, perhaps he, and we, should be a bit more thankful that we don't have José's handicaps to battle.

Now where does Uncle Sam fit into this picture?

On all sides, in all countries I heard that Latin American feeling towards us is better than it has ever been, that the Good Neighbor policy has paid handsome dividends. It is only common sense that we continue it.

Although we have drummed up a certain amount of enthusiasm at home for the Pan American doctrine, we must not deceive ourselves into believing it is something which will sweep South and Central America like the jigsaw puzzles and yo-yos which captured our popular fancies. Two-thirds of the Latin Americans know little and care less about what happens beyond their village frontiers. And Latin Americans, culturally speaking, are much closer to Europe than to us, even though, as Americans, most of us do live on one continuous land mass.

We must encourage Pan-Americanism. I'll let General Benjamin Henríquez of Honduras tell how both of us think this can best be done: "What we need is United States capital and technical advisers to help us build healthful, productive communities which will be of more value to the United States than our present poor ones."

But while we are encouraging Pan-Americanism, we must not make the mistake of trying to isolate the Western Hemisphere from the rest of the world. It cannot be done for the reason that the bulk of American trade normally cuts across hemispheric lines and we are not self-sufficient in raw materials. If American rubber can compete in the long run with

East Indian rubber, all well and good. If not, are we to raise artificial barriers to protect it?

The Good Neighbor policy restricted only to the Western Hemisphere will be hopelessly out of date at war's end. China is and always will be more important to us than Chile. Favoritism and fences will merely start the ball rolling for new troubles. The day has come when we must remove the stigma from "foreigner," when we must get acquainted with and get along with our neighbors. Not only is it the Christian thing to do, it is good business and good politics.

May we look forward to a Good Neighbor policy for the world.

Acknowledgments

To the friendly folks of Latin America, I want to express my deep appreciation. The *hacendado* who proudly showed me his acres; the señorita who told me about chaperones; the grinning peon who let me ride his burro; the government official who took time to show me his country; the boys and girls who crowded into the vision of my camera lens—these are the folks to whom I am indebted. It was through their eyes that I saw, and learned to love, Latin America.

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